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Memorial Edition

PLAYS BY CLYDE FITCH

IN FOUR VOLUMES

VOLUME TWO

BARBARA FRIETCHIE
CAPTAIN JINKS OF THE HORSE MARINES
THE CLIMBERS

EDITED BY MONTROSE J. MOSES
AND VIRGINIA GERSON

42281

BOSTON
LITTLE, BROWN, AND COMPANY
1926

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PREFATORY NOTE

In "Barbara Frietchie" and "Captain Jinks of the Horse Marines", Mr. Fitch continued the picturesque historical vein, so successfully begun in "Beau Brummell", "Frédéric Lemaître", "His Grace de Grammont" and "Nathan Hale." His love of a period was not an artificial taste with him; he had the inestimable ability of absorbing atmosphere, and of giving to his detail little intimate touches which resulted in realism amidst romantic action. And even though there is such wide contrast between the first two plays in this volume and "The Climbers", one can easily detect in "Captain Jinks", for example, characteristic flashes foreshadowing the satirist of the later social plays.

It is not so easy a matter to re-create a period convincingly, however picturesque the details and however romantic the plot. Mr. Fitch's inventions were always entertaining. But it was because of his ability to make himself a part of the time, place, and manner, that his

scenes breathed a reality which gave them life. "Barbara Frietchie" has an intimate touch of the South during the Civil War, without being flamboyantly colored. "Captain Jinks" — as excellent in technique as Sir Arthur Wing Pinero's "Trelawny of the 'Wells' ", and excelling Mr. Edward Sheldon's later attempt, in "Romance", to embody the old-time flavor of New York city, — revealed, without effort or pose, that intimacy and contemporaneousness which are to be found in some old Journal, written by an eye-witness. In such achievements as these "costume" plays, Mr. Fitch showed exceptional ability, and won popular distinction.

"Barbara Frietchie" deals delicately with the love romance of Mr. Fitch's mother and father. In plot it is simple, and it is theatrically effective, as well as theatrically reflective of all the excitement of war, without the panoply of war. As soon as it was announced that Miss Julia Marlowe would appear in the historical rôle, the papers began to speculate as to how the dramatist would handle the subject. "They've begun already to scold me about lying," Fitch wrote to some friend. Naturally, it would have been impossible for him to gain much romantic interest by keeping his heroine an old woman, to accord with historical tradition. A concession had to be

granted him at the very outset. But there are always exact critics who can allow a dramatist no latitude; and even before "Barbara Frietchie" was produced, Mr. Fitch found himself opposed by the Press. This necessitated his printing on his program a disclaimer as to the historical exactness of his situation, and declaring his sole ambition to picture the spirit and atmosphere of a particular period, through a delicate, imaginary story. Both the playwright and the actress were amply rewarded. Some of Mr. Fitch's severest critics could not but recognize in "Barbara Frietchie" much ingenuity and much cumulative effect. In the preparations for the production of this play he exhibited the same particularity, as regards costuming and stage setting, that marked his "Nathan Hale."

It was generally the case with Clyde Fitch that he based the story of his play on some definite incident or situation brought to his notice or coming under his direct observation. From a mere suggestion he would often gradually evolve his plot. But "Captain Jinks" was inspired purely by his love for an historical period. And we believe that its source of being lay entirely in the fact that he had often declared his interest in the manners and customs of 1872. The real seeds for this play, in which Miss Ethel Barry-

more gained her first distinction as a "star", are to be found in the popular songs, "Shoo fly! Don't bother me", and "I'm Captain Jinks of the Horse Marines."

"The Climbers" marks a definite departure on the part of the playwright, both in technique and in approach. When Professor Brander Matthews was asked to open the Fitch Memorial Lectureship on the Drama, established at Amherst College by the dramatist's mother — during one of the discourses, he said in substance: The historical is not the highest form of drama. An author knows best the contemporary life immediately about him, and can deal with it easily. But for historical setting, he must reach the ideals through research and reading, and often his estimates are not accurate, and often they are devoid of spontaneity. The drama, based on contemporary life, in time takes on an historical value. In this way, Clyde Fitch's "The Climbers" will be a definite document to the social historians of the next century. It has the same grasp of existing conditions that is manifested in Howells's "The Rise of Silas Lapham" and in Mark Twain's "Life on the Mississippi."

In other words, Mr. Fitch's most distinctive and his most mature vein began to assert itself in this play — his vein of the commonplace raised

to a height of refreshing satire, which was brilliant and unusual. In fact, the very unusualness of the opening scene resulted in "The Climbers" being sent travelling from manager's office to manager's office before Miss Amelia Bingham accepted it, and assembled around her a brilliant company for its production.

This change in interest, which now marked the work of the playwright, began to find expression in his comments on the theatre. "The plays that have lasted," Mr. Fitch once wrote, "are valuable to us as literature and as documents. Technique never has kept a play alive through the centuries. Technique alone is machinery, and we improve all machinery year by year. Outside of their literature, many of Shakespeare's plays are documents of hourly life and manners in the days of Elizabeth, and if you are interested in knowing what life was in town and country before and during the Restoration, read Wycherley, Congreve, Beaumont and Fletcher. You will find there the small human document you won't get out of history, *per se*. So Sheridan reproduces the social Georgian era, Oscar Wilde the late Victorian, and in France, Lavadan, Hervieu, and Capus are giving the Paris and France of the twentieth century for future generations to reproduce for themselves, if they wish.

"I feel myself very strongly the particular value — a value which, rightly or wrongly, I cannot help feeling inestimable — in a modern play of reflecting absolutely and truthfully the life and environment about us; every class, every kind, every emotion, every motive, every occupation, every business, every idleness! Never was life so varied, so complex; what a choice, then! Take what strikes you most, in the hope it will interest others. Take what suits you most to do — what perhaps you can do best — and then do it better. Be truthful, and then nothing can be too big, nothing should be too small, so long as it is here, and *there!* Apart from the question of literature, apart from the question of art, reflect the real thing, with true observation and with sincere feeling for what it is and what it represents, and that is art and literature in a modern play. If you inculcate an idea in your play, so much the better for your play and for you — and for your audience. In fact, there is small hope for your play *as* a play, if you haven't some small idea in it somewhere and somehow, even if it is hidden — it is sometimes better for you if it is hidden, but it must of course be integral. Some ideas are mechanical. Then they are no good. These are the ideas for which the author does all the

work, instead of letting the ideas do the work for him. One should write what one sees; but observe under the surface. It is a mistake to look at the reflection of the sky in the water of theatrical convention. Instead, look up and into the sky of real life itself."

Writing from Carlsbad, on June 13, 1900, Mr. Fitch said, "I finished 'The Climbers' today, and I think the last act may be the best thing I've done. I feel this act has something in it besides the theatre!" When the play was first produced, he was accused of bad taste in the dress-selling scene, and the general critical opinion was that such a situation could never have happened among that "set" of people. But, as a matter of fact, the incident did actually occur in New York city, and no sooner was it told to Mr. Fitch than he used it with an unerring sense of its dramatic effectiveness.

MONTROSE J. MOSES,
VIRGINIA GERSON.

NEW YORK,
JULY, 1915.

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BARBARA FRIETCHIE

THE FREDERICK GIRL

A PLAY IN FOUR ACTS

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TO JULIA MARLOWE

How much Barbara and I both owe to you! You crept into her very heart (and mine!), and like the Good Fairy at the birth of the Princess, endowed her with her best gift, your own Personal Charm! How grateful I am I will try to prove by giving her to you after you yourself have made her dear to me.

CLYDE FITCH.

NEW YORK, 1900.

BARBARA FRIETCHIE, THE FREDERICK GIRL

THE FIRST ACT. *A Street in Frederick.*
After Supper.

THE SECOND ACT. *The Lutheran Minister's House in Hagerstown.*
The Following Day.

THE THIRD ACT. *The Frietchie House in Frederick.*
Two Days Later.

THE FOURTH ACT. THE FIRST SCENE. BARBARA'S *Room.*
The Next Morning.
THE SECOND SCENE. *The Street.*

The author disclaims any intention to the writing of an historical play. He has endeavored merely to picture in an imaginary story some of the spirit and atmosphere of a certain period of our history, using the personality of BARBARA FRIETCHIE as best lending itself to his purpose.

THE PERSONS IN THE PLAY

BARBARA FRIETCHIE.
SALLY NEGLY.
SUE ROYCE.
LAURA ROYCE.
MRS. HUNTER.
MAMMY LU.
CAPT. TRUMBULL.
MR. FRIETCHIE.
ARTHUR FRIETCHIE.
COL. NEGLY.
JACK NEGLY.
FRED GELWEX, TIM GREENE } *Soldiers.*
EDGAR STRONG.
DR. HAL BOYD.
SERGT. JAMES.
CORPL. PERKINS.
ORDERLY.
A BOY.
SOLDIERS, TOWNSPEOPLE AND CHILDREN.

The Period is 1863.

As originally produced at the Broad Street Theatre, Philadelphia, October 10, 1899, and two weeks later at the Criterion Theatre, New York.

Barbara Frietchie	Julia Marlowe
Sally Negly	Katherine Wilson
Sue Royce	Norah Lamison
Laura Royce	Mary Blyth
Mrs. Hunter	Annie Clarke
Mammy Lu	Alice Leigh
Capt. Trumbull	J. H. Gilmour
Mr. Frietchie	George Woodward
Arthur Frietchie	Lionel Adams
Col. Negly	W. J. LeMoyne
Jack Negly	Arnold Daly
Fred Gelwex	Dodson Mitchell
Tim Greene	Becton Radford
Edgar Strong	Donald MacLaren
Dr. Hal Boyd	Algernon Tassin
Sergt. James	Frank Colfax
Corpl. Perkins	Ralph Lewis
Orderly	H. Phillips
A Boy	Byron Ongley

Soldiers, Townspeople and Children.

The Period is 1863.

The scenery was painted by Mr. E. G. Unitt. The costumes were designed by Miss Virginia Gerson.

Miss Marlowe and her company were presented in the play under the direction of Mr. Charles Frohman.

THE FIRST ACT

A Street in Frederick. After Supper

Across the brick pavement, three houses stand facing us, two of red with white trimmings in the early Colonial style of architecture, the other house, on our Right, of wood, painted brown, and placed back from the street, with a small garden and a picket fence. In the garden is a round bed of scarlet geraniums, and a honeysuckle vine grows over the front door. The street turns a corner around the garden, where a big lilac bush grows. The centre house belongs to the Frietchies, *and over its steps is a balcony, supported on four Corinthian columns in wood, painted white. The windows of all the houses in the street are*

open, and there are lamps lit in many of the lower rooms. The house with the garden belongs to the Royce family; the house on the left is the home of COL. NEGLY, *his son and daughter.*

The theatre is darkened, and "Dixie" is played once by the orchestra. Then the curtain rises slowly and softly without orchestral music.

It is the starry twilight of a languorous Summer night, and the air is tremulous and full of the scent of honeysuckle and jasmine. On the steps of the Frietchie house sit two girls, LAURA *and* SUE ROYCE. *They are pretty, rather thoughtless young creatures, but sweet-tempered and warm-hearted. They wear soft, light dresses, open at the neck, and are bare-armed. Through an open window* BARBARA *is heard at the piano singing "Kathleen Mavourneen." The light on the stage is soft and dim. On the farther*

stoop sit SALLY NEGLY *and* EDGAR STRONG, *a young couple in the heyday of a "boy-and-girl" flirtation.* BARBARA *finishes the first verse of "Kathleen Mavourneen," and* LAURA, *joining in softly, sings the last line with her.* BARBARA, *after a moment's strumming, begins singing a second verse. Two small children run past, playing hide-and-go-seek. Hearing* BARBARA, *they stop to listen beneath her window, holding hands, till she finishes "Kathleen," when they romp away, continuing their sport.*

SUE. [*Calls across to the Negly steps.*] Sally!

LAURA. [*Leaning over and touching* SUE.] Sh! She's got a beau with her.

SUE. No, it's her brother! [MAMMY LU, *a dear old colored woman, comes down the street with a market basket, and passes through the gate into the Royce house.* LAURA *turns her head*

and watches the Negly steps. SUE *calls again.*] Sally!

SALLY. What?

SUE. Come on over on our steps.

SALLY. I can't; I'm not alone!

LAURA. [*Turning her head back to* SUE.] I told you so. [*The two girls titter.*] It's Edgar Strong!

[SUE *joins in with* BARBARA *and sings with her.* SALLY *and* STRONG *are seen rising on their steps. She follows him coyly to the bottom step, where they linger over a tender good-by. She fastens a spray of honeysuckle from her dress into the lapel of his coat. He starts to go, but stops at the corner of the steps and they say good-by once more.*

LAURA. He's going!

[*Craning her neck to see surreptitiously.*

SUE. I wonder if he'll pass here?

[BARBARA, *having finished "Kathleen Mavourneen," sings "Maryland, My Maryland."* STRONG, *leaving* SALLY, *who goes into her house, comes slowly past the other girls, going down the street. A short distance from* SALLY'S *steps, he turns and looks back, but she has gone in. He comes on, absorbed, unconscious of the presence of* SUE *and* LAURA, *and passes them.* SUE *and* LAURA *both "ahem!" pointedly. He doesn't hear them, and turns the Royce corner. The two girls titter.*

LAURA. [*Laughing.*] Sally's got a real stylish beau, hasn't she?

[*A pause. The girls lean back against the railings, fanning themselves.*

SUE. [*Getting up.*] Is Barbara going to sing the whole evening? Why doesn't she come out

on the steps? [*She leans over the railing, trying to look into the Frietchie parlor window. She calls.*] Barbara!

[*A light is seen in an upper window of* SALLY'S *house.*

LAURA. Sh! She's very sentimental to-night, and it's not Jack Negly either.

SUE. [*Turning and leaning with her back against the railing.*] Who, then?

LAURA. Captain Trumbull —

SUE. The Yankee! Law! what a flirt she is! Why, Jack Negly's been her *acknowledged beau!*

LAURA. *You* needn't talk! You're younger'n Barbara and have had twice as many beaux as she already!

[BARBARA, *having finished "Maryland, My Maryland," sings "Listen to the Mocking Bird."*

SUE. Oh! if you call walking out to the cemetery every evening with *one* fellow making him your beau! But Barbara's been caught within a week down the Hagerstown pike with *two different* men's arms about her.

LAURA. Well, I reckon you wish *you* could be caught like that!

SUE. [*Laughing good-naturedly.*] Yes, indeedy, I shouldn't mind a bit!

[*Sitting down on the top step. The two girls again subside into silence.* BARBARA'S *voice steals out sweetly through the open windows with the "Mocking Bird" refrain. A young couple, arm in arm, stroll absorbedly past, on their way back from the usual Lovers' Walk of the town — where the willows weep and hearts stop beating underneath cool white marble names.*

SALLY. [*Calls, leaning out of her window upstairs.*] Girls, are you there yet?

LAURA. Yes.

SUE. Come on down.

[SALLY *closes the blinds and disappears.*

LAURA. [*Calls.*] Barbara!

BARBARA. [*Inside.*] Well?

LAURA. Sally Negly's coming over!

BARBARA. [*Inside.*] Glad it's not *her brother!* [*Runs her hand over all the piano keys from base to treble.*

SUE. Oh, my! Isn't she airy! [*She looks down the street.*] Here comes Hal Boyd.

LAURA. What do I care!

[*Tossing her head.*

SUE. Oh, what a fine tail our cat's got! You seemed to care a good deal at the picnic last week.

LAURA. You needn't throw any stones! You were in a glass house at the picnic yourself — with Arthur Frietchie. Which way is he coming?

[*Looking slyly up and down the street.*

SUE. He isn't! I was only making believe —

LAURA. [*Laughing in spite of herself.*] Oh, you mean thing!

SALLY. [*Who has come out from her house, joins them. She is perhaps more vivacious than the other two. About the wrists of her bare arms she has tied little black velvet bows. It is well known in Frederick that once upon a time she really slapped a young man who kissed her against her will.*] Why isn't Barbara out?

SUE. [*Very pointedly.*] No men here yet!

SALLY. Jack's coming right over.

[*Sitting on the lowest step.*

SUE. [*Calls.*] Barbara, Jack's coming over!

BARBARA. [*Inside, emphatically, and accompanying herself with chords upon the piano.*] *Not at home!*

[*She begins singing "Her Bright Smile Haunts Me Still." The Three Graces on the steps exchange glances.*

SALLY. That's just how she treats Jack now!

LAURA. And every one's talking about Barbara and that ornry Yankee!

SUE. I don't think he's ornry; I think he's nice.

SALLY. He's *your enemy* and you ought to *hate* him! I shan't have anything more to do with Bab if she doesn't stop seeing Captain Trumbull.

SUE. He has a lovely mustache.

SALLY. It isn't the mustache that makes the man!

[*N. B.* — EDGAR STRONG'S *face is very smooth.*]

[JACK *comes out of the Negly house and approaches. He is a handsome young fellow of twenty. He was a harum-scarum boy, and he is a lovable, impetuous youth, with his heart on his sleeve.*

LAURA. Barbara's a true Southern girl; I don't understand her having him around.

SUE. Good evening, Jack. Oh, my, isn't it warm?

[*They all exchange a greeting.*

JACK. [*Stands directly in front of the steps, his back to the audience.*] Where's Barbara?

[*All three motion to the parlor.*

LAURA. Don't you hear her?

JACK. [*Calls.*] Barbara!

[*She stops singing a moment to hear who is speaking.* JACK *repeats* "Barbara!" *She at once begins singing again emphatically, pointedly.*

He goes up the steps between the girls, and, standing on the top step, calls more loudly.

JACK. Barbara!

LAURA. She hears you!

JACK. I *must* see you.

BARBARA. [*Inside.*] I'm not at home — to *cowards!*

[*A moment's silence.* JACK *stands hurt.* SALLY *rises and seizes her brother's hand, saying* "Jack!" BARBARA *begins singing again. Then* JACK *quickly and firmly enters the house, and, a moment after,* BARBARA'S *singing ends abruptly.*

SALLY. [*Eagerly.*] Would it be wrong to listen?

SUE. [*Standing up as near to the window as she can and leaning far over the railing, listens hard.*] Decidedly! And, anyway, I can't hear a word.

[*She comes down from her listening position and sits again on the steps. Two Union Soldiers stroll down the street, one smoking, the other with a rose between his teeth. As they pass the Frietchie stoop the girls stop speaking.*

SALLY. Yankees!

[*The girls on the lower steps swish their dresses up out of the way of contamination. The soldier with a rose, to tease the Southern young ladies, throws the flower at* LAURA. *She plucks it from her dress, where it falls, and throws it after him with a loud "Ech!" of disgust, and at once the three girls together begin singing "Dixie" with unmistakable emphasis, till the laughing soldiers are out of hearing.*

SALLY. [*Sitting beside* LAURA.] I wish Bab would be Jack's sweetheart for good and all. We can't do anything with him home now. He

locks himself up for whole days, and answers so queerly sometimes when you speak to him! Mother cries about it.

SUE. Did Bab ever lead him on?

SALLY. Well, at our Soldiers' Ball she danced every schottische with him!

LAURA. She's mad because he won't fight for the South.

SALLY. She's no right to be mad with him for that, when *she's* flirting with a Yankee.

SUE. And while they're in possession of our town, too!

SALLY. I wish her *brother* were here.

SUE. [*Rising proudly.*] Yes, *he* wouldn't allow it.

[*Leaning over again to try and listen. The other two girls exchange amused glances at* SUE'S *expense.*

SALLY. Of course *you* think Arthur Frietchie wouldn't allow anything!

SUE. [*Trying to listen.*] Well, Arthur Frietchie's with *Stonewall Jackson*, brave boy! And that's more than you can say for your beau.

SALLY. The only reason Edgar Strong didn't go was, I said I'd never speak to him again if he did!

SUE. I said that to Arthur, and he said he'd have to go all the same. But I kept my word; I didn't *speak* to him!

SALLY. What did you do?

SUE. Hugged and kissed him!

LAURA. The *whole town* is angry about Barbara. All the *vestrymen* of our church were at the house, this afternoon, begging Mr. Frietchie to forbid Barbara's seeing Captain Trumbull any more.

SUE. Bab adores her father. I wonder what

would happen if she were called on to choose between the two? [*There is a sudden loud discord on the piano. The girls look up,* LAURA *and* SALLY *rising.*] Gracious! There must be a row!

[*All three, with their arms linked about each other, lean over the side railing, trying to overhear.*

BARBARA. [*Inside.*] Oh! How dare you! how dare you!

[JACK'S *voice is heard, strained and harsh, as if speaking beyond his control.*

JACK. [*Inside.*] Very well; I'll go to the War. Do you hear me, Bab? I'll go and fight if you want it! *I'll go!* But not to fight for my country; understand that? To fight him! To kill this damned Northerner who has taken you from me! *You!* Barbara Frietchie, whom I love better than the South, better than my life!

[*The three girls on the stoop are frightened. After a moment's silence, the front door is flung back, and* JACK *comes out, leaving the door wide open. He looks wild and is without his hat. The positions of the girls on the steps block his way.*

JACK. Out of my way! Damn all women!

[*The girls, frightened, make way for him,* SALLY *seizing hold of him by the arm to stop him.*

SALLY. Jack!

JACK. [*As if he did not recognize her and shaking himself roughly free.*] Let go!

[*He strides down the steps.*

SALLY. Jack!

JACK. [*At the bottom of the steps, turns and looks at the three girls, who, frightened, cling together. He speaks bitterly.*] The *Three Graces!* Ha, ha! That's what some sentimental idiots would call

you! But the witches from "Macbeth" are what you are! Ha, ha, ha! Liars! cheats! hags! all of you!

[*Laughs again as he goes off down the street past his house.* BARBARA *has come out of the door as he finishes speaking, and stands on the top step. As he goes, she speaks after him in a voice, angry and excited, yet with a certain girlish dignity.*

BARBARA. Call us what you like, but remember that we women *love* the man we honor and give our *lips* to the man we love!

[BARBARA *is a ravishing young creature, who has more or less willingly "upset" most of the youth of the town. A loose, delightful curl of her wavy, dark hair lies on her white neck, held in place by a red-pink camellia. Her eyes are large and beautiful and she does what*

she likes with them. Her soul is awakening within her, however, and her coquetry has seen its best days. She is dressed in a billowy mass of blue gauziness, bare neck, save for a blue cameo, and bare arms, save for two lovely dimples. Another camellia, the color of her lips, is caught at her waist. A bit of a black ankle-strap shows above a tiny triangle of white stocking.

SALLY. Barbara, don't mind what he says.

BARBARA. [*Still indignant.*] I never gave your brother the right to speak so to me!

SALLY. [*Still trying to pacify.*] He doesn't know what he says.

BARBARA. How dared he!

[*Rearranging the short sleeves of her dress, disarranged by* JACK'S *unwelcome embrace.*

SALLY. Bab, he's out of his head for love of you! Can't you love him?

BARBARA. [*Sitting on the top step.*] You can't *make* yourself love, Sally.

SALLY. Yes, you can. I could love anybody!

[*Sitting below* BARBARA.

SUE. You do! You love everybody!

[*Sitting beside* BARBARA. *They all laugh gaily.*

BARBARA. No, seriously, girls; love is a wilful, adorable child that teases you till you give him his own way.

LAURA. [*Sitting on the lower step.*] Love is a saint that stands always by you and *blesses* you when you find and know him.

SALLY. Love is a magician that can make hearts change places in a second. Presto chango! mine's in —

BARBARA. [*Interrupting laughingly, and taking her hand.*] Yours is in Edgar Strong's breast and his heart takes its place.

SUE. Love isn't Cupid really. He's Jupiter, and rules all the world.

BARBARA. Love is — Girls, I think *love* is a *man!* [*They laugh merrily again.*

SALLY. A Yankee man?

BARBARA. [*On the defensive.*] I *like* Captain Trumbull.

[COL. NEGLY, *who has come out from his house, now reaches the Frietchie steps.*

COL. NEGLY. [*Bowing.*] Well, young ladies!

[BARBARA *rises.*

ALL. [*Together.*] Good evening, Colonel Negly.

SALLY. Good evening, father.

COL. NEGLY. Barbara, is your father in?

BARBARA. No, sir; but won't you sit down?

COL. NEGLY. No, thank you. I'm afraid I'd be taking up room a younger man will be coming after. I'll smoke a cigar on my own steps,

and be over again later when your father's back.

BARBARA. I'll tell father, sir.

[*Sitting down.* NEGLY *strolls back to his steps, lighting a cigar. He sits there smoking, scarcely visible, except for the glow of his cigar end.* EDGAR STRONG *and* HAL BOYD, *coming up the street, reach the Frietchie steps and salute the young ladies. At the same time three girls, arm in arm, come from the opposite side, pass the two young men, and look back over their shoulders as they pass on around the Royce corner and out of sight.*

HAL. [*Standing in front of the steps.*] Miss Laura, may I speak to you a minute?

[*The three girls "ahem!" mischievously.*

LAURA. [*Coming down and joining* HAL *on the pavement.*] What is it, Doctor Hal?

[*He takes her a little to one side. The murmur of the others' voices is heard during their few private speeches. As they leave the steps,* SALLY *moves nearer to* SUE *and* BARBARA, *and they whisper together.*

HAL. Persuade Sue to go in and play on the piano. Pretend we want to dance out here. Edgar will take Sally, too.

LAURA. [*Puzzled.*] But —

HAL. [*Interrupting.*] Don't ask any questions; just trust me. When she thinks we're dancing, we four'll steal for a walk to the cemetery and back.

LAURA. But Barbara?

HAL. Barbara will be grateful to you when she understands.

LAURA. And *I* will be grateful to *you* when I do!

HAL. That'll be when the War's over.

LAURA. Not till *then?*

HAL. Perhaps before, but it's serious. Won't you help me?

LAURA. Of course, Doctor Hal.

[*Turning to join the others.*

HAL. Be careful, Edgar and Sally mustn't suspect any plan.

LAURA. Huh, huh! Girls, wouldn't it be fun to dance!

[STRONG *rises when* LAURA *reaches the steps.*

SALLY. Oh, my, it's so warm!

LAURA. But out here on the pavement.

EDGAR. Yes. Come along, Sally.

SUE. [*Rises.*] Yes.

BARBARA. [*Rising.*] Shall I play for you?

LAURA. [*Quickly going to* BARBARA *and pulling her down toward* HAL.] No, you must be tired.

You've been singing and playing for weeks! Sue will, *won't* you, Sue?

SUE. Yes, indeedy! What, a schottische?

LAURA AND SALLY. Huh, huh!

[SUE *goes into the house.*

HAL. [*Aside to* BARBARA, *very seriously.*] Stay here on the steps, no matter what *we* do.

BARBARA. Why?

SALLY. [*Turning to look at* BARBARA *and* HAL.] Bab, stop flirting with Hal! I insist he shall dance with Laura.

BARBARA. [*With a mocking courtesy to* HAL.] Oh, certainly! [*Laughingly.*] I'll take Edgar.

SALLY. [*Seizing* EDGAR *and dragging him down the steps, laughingly.*] No, you won't! You can be a wallflower for once in your life.

[SUE, *indoors, begins playing a seductive schottische. The two couples start dancing.* BAR-

BARA *watches them a moment, standing on the lower step.* HAL *nods encouragingly and meaningly to her to sit down. She looks puzzled, but sits on the top step.*

LAURA. [*While dancing.*] Law, Sally! have you seen Alice Hager dance the schottische?

SALLY. [*As she dances.*] No, indeedy; but I've seen her *try* to!

EDGAR. [*While dancing.*] I can go you one better; I've tried to dance it with her!

HAL. [*While dancing.*] Well, Edgar, you have my sympathy! [*Close to* EDGAR and SALLY, *stops dancing.*] Let's play a joke on Sue—leave her playing as long as she will, and we go for a walk. [*All stop dancing.*

SALLY. What for?

EDGAR. But what about Barbara?

HAL. Oh, she won't tell, will you, Barbara? [*Gives her a hint by voice and manner to say "No."*

BARBARA. No.

LAURA. Come along then, to the cemetery and back.

[*Taking* HAL'S *arm, they start down the street, turning to wave good-by to* BARBARA, LAURA *throwing a kiss.* SALLY *and* EDGAR *follow behind them, also turning to wave good-by.*

SALLY. I wonder how long Sue'll keep on playing?

[*And she and* EDGAR *pass out of sight. From the Royce house a Figure comes stealthily, wrapped about with a great cloak. It seems like a gaunt woman in the dark. It steals across the garden, keeping close to the side of the Frietchie house, and, when it reaches the Royce fence, leans over carefully and reconnoiters. Then the Figure says* "Psst!" *twice, and adds* "Barbara" *softly, to attract her notice.* BARBARA *rises, a little startled, not know-*

ing where the voice comes from. She stands still, listening to hear it again. At this moment, SUE *calls loudly from the inside, with friendly satire:* "Don't be afraid to say when you're tired." *The Figure draws back in the shadow till* SUE *has finished speaking, then again leans over the fence and calls* "Barbara!" BARBARA *hears and turns to see who it is.*

BARBARA. [*A little frightened.*] What is it? Who are you? What do you want?

[*The Figure whispers* "Sh!" *with a finger on its lips; then goes swiftly and softly along the fence, out by the gate to the Frietchie stoop. There it staggers, but catches itself by the railing, saying* "Sister!" *in a low voice.*

BARBARA. [*Going down a step or two toward him.*] Arthur!

[ARTHUR FRIETCHIE *is a high-spirited young*

Southern soldier, engaged heart and soul in the War.

ARTHUR. I was wounded yesterday in a skirmish on the Gettysburg pike. The Yankees have taken Hagerstown, but I managed not to get caught, crawled here, and have been all day at the Royces'. You must hide me in our cellar till I can get well — or die —

[*He sinks on the second step.*

BARBARA. [*Beside him, tenderly.*] Arthur, darling! Quick! Some one will see you!

[*She puts her arm about his shoulder and he tries to rise.*

COL. NEGLY. [*Calls from his steps, where he sits smoking.*] No sign of your father yet, Barbara?

BARBARA. No, not yet, Colonel.

[SUE, *indoors, stops playing.*

SUE. If I play another note, I'll get the St. Vitus's dance!

[ARTHUR, *who has risen, starts and looks questioningly at* BARBARA.

BARBARA. It's Sue Royce.

SUE. [*Parting the ruffled white Swiss curtains of the Frietchie parlor window, looks out.*] I reckon you take me for a *hand-organ!* Law! not a soul!

[BARBARA *and* ARTHUR *keep still in the shadow of the doorway.* SUE *laughs.*] Well, if that isn't a good joke on me!

[*She leaves the window,* BARBARA *and* ARTHUR *looking quickly and questioningly at each other.*

ARTHUR. We can trust Sue.

BARBARA. Come!

[*She has her arm around him, as he is very weak, and they turn to enter the house. At this*

moment, CAPT. TRUMBULL, *who has been coming slowly along past the Royce fence, smoking a pipe, reaches the Frietchie steps. He pauses to see who is on the top step. At the same moment,* SUE *comes out, and the door opening, a flood of light falls on* BARBARA *and* ARTHUR. SUE *recognizes him with a cry.*

SUE. Arthur!

BARBARA. Hush! *Don't* speak his name!

[TRUMBULL, *taking his pipe out of his mouth, whistles softly to himself. He is a tall, slender, handsome Northerner, dressed in the uniform of a Union captain. He is one of those fine-hearted, open-souled men, who are loved as baby, boy, and man by every one, but so unconsciously, so far as themselves are concerned, as to never be spoiled. Every girl in the town, rebel or no rebel, could tell you his*

eyes were blue and his mustache golden. His fellow soldiers swear by his bravery and his comradeship. He stands still a moment and then makes a movement to go up the steps, but stops himself and walks along leisurely back up the street, smoking hard. He soon turns again slowly, however, puts away his pipe, and, going up the Frietchie steps, raps with the iron knocker. As he stands waiting, a Search Gang of eight Union Soldiers, headed by a SERGEANT, *march to the Royce gate and are led through the garden to the front door. Meanwhile, when* CAPT. TRUMBULL *has knocked,* COL. NEGLY *rises and leans on his side railing, speaking.*

COL. NEGLY. [*Unable to distinguish in the dim evening light.*] Is that you, Frietchie?

TRUMBULL. No, sir, it's Captain Trumbull.

COL. NEGLY. [*Angry.*] Oh, I know you, sir! You're a damned Yankee, sir!

[*The Royce door is opened by* MAMMY LU, *and the Search Gang enter the house.*

TRUMBULL. [*Amused.*] I'm a Union soldier, sir.

COL. NEGLY. So was I a soldier, sir, in a *just* cause. I was a colonel in the Mexican War, sir!

TRUMBULL. I am glad you are not fighting this time, Colonel.

COL. NEGLY. I'm not, sir, and I'll take up the sword again, sir, if they need me. I'm not too old yet, sir! I may join the blessed South in a fortnight, sir! [TRUMBULL *knocks again.*

TRUMBULL. [*Amused.*] I might keep you a prisoner here, Colonel, and prevent your leaving the town.

COL. NEGLY. The town won't be yours, sir, in

a fortnight! There won't be a damned Yankee left in the place, sir, in a fortnight! [TRUMBULL *knocks again, this time more loudly.*] And, thank God, sir, while you Northerners have our dear town, not one of 'em dares to call on *my daughter*, sir! Frietchie's got to stop it, too, sir! We're coming to have a word with him. [TRUMBULL *knocks louder.*] Not that I have anything against you personally, sir. I'm bound to believe if it weren't for the War you might be a gentleman, sir!

[*The Frietchie door is opened on a crack by* BARBARA.

BARBARA. Who is it?

TRUMBULL. It is I, Miss Barbara.

BARBARA. Oh!

[*She puts out her bare arm and they shake hands. There is a pause of embarrassment.*

TRUMBULL. I've come to see you. Mayn't I come in?

BARBARA. [*Comes out quickly, closing the door behind her.*] Oh, yes, indeedy! Do, Captain Trumbull; only don't you think it's cooler and pleasanter out here?

TRUMBULL. Perhaps, only please leave the door open.

BARBARA. [*Nervous, a little alarmed.*] Why?

TRUMBULL. Perhaps it's because I want to see your face!

BARBARA. Or let *me* see *yours*. They say you Northerners are all vain.

TRUMBULL. Miss Barbara, please leave the door open. I have a good reason.

BARBARA. Oh, very well, if you're going to be melancholy over it!

[*She opens the door; the light from the hall floods*

the steps. BARBARA *sits in the middle of the top step, her dress spread out as if she were barring the way.* TRUMBULL *sits below her. The Provost Guard is seen coming out of the Royce house. They are followed to the gate by* MAMMY LU, *who is very angry with them.*

MAMMY LU. Is you froo? Bress de Lawd! Is you done giv' up fin'in' any pore Southern sojers hyah? Ain't you gwine to look inside the roses a-growing on de bushes, you devils? And didn't you forget to look under the stah carpet? And dere's the kitchen closet; you oughter look in the flour barrel and inside the chickens' eggs, too! The hens hyah hide little Rebs in dem, sure!

BARBARA. [*Rises, frightened.*] A search gang?

TRUMBULL. A provost's guard.

[*She turns to shut the door.* TRUMBULL *also rises.*

TRUMBULL. [*Firmly.*] Miss Barbara, don't close that door!

BARBARA. [*Recovering herself.*] Why should I? I've nothing to fear from them. They won't try to search here.

[*She sits again on the top step. The soldiers pay no attention to the old mammy, who is furious, and, as the last man passes out, the* SERGEANT *calls:* "Good night, Venus!"

MAMMY LU. Don' you call me no names, you low-down white trash you! You devils!

[*She slams the gate and goes back into the house, muttering to herself:* "I'm a 'spectable culled lady, I is! I ain't taking no back talk from no ornry sojers! No, siree!"

[*The soldiers are led to the Frietchie house,*

where they halt. The SERGEANT *and men salute.*

SERGEANT. We have orders, Captain, to search every house in this quarter of the town. Information has reached headquarters that several families in this neighborhood are harboring Union deserters and Rebel spies.

BARBARA. [*Rises.*] There is no spy in this house!

SERGEANT. How about Union deserters and Rebel soldiers? At any rate, our orders are to search every house. You will pardon me, madam.

[*He starts up the steps, the men following.*

BARBARA. [*Coming down a step.*] There is no one here!

SERGEANT. [*Roughly.*] Stand aside; your word's not enough!

[*Raises his arm to push past her.*

TRUMBULL. One minute, Sergeant! This lady's word *is sufficient* for *me!*

SERGEANT. I have orders —

TRUMBULL. [*Interrupting.*] I will be responsible for this house, that there is no one in it. You are not to search. Refer to me at headquarters.

SERGEANT. [*Going down the steps.*] Very well, Captain.

TRUMBULL. By the way, Sergeant?

[SERGEANT *and men stop.*

SERGEANT. Yes, Captain.

TRUMBULL. I'm not responsible for the house *next door;* you'd better search that!

SERGEANT. Yes, Captain! March!

[*He leads the men to Negly's steps.*

BARBARA. [*Laughing mischievously.*] Oh, he'll be furious!

SERGEANT. [*At Negly's steps.*] Halt!

[*The men halt*

COL. NEGLY. [*Who has risen in a rage as the* SERGEANT *and men come to his steps.*] By Gawd! it's an outrage! You'll not search my house!

SERGEANT. Will you open the door, sir, or shall we break it in?

COL. NEGLY. If you *dare* break my door, sir! No, sir! Come in and search. You'll find nothing, sir, not even a Southern welcome, sir!

[*They go into the house.* MAMMY LU *appears at an upper window of the Royce house, shaking her dust cloth, and muttering angrily at the soldiers, till they are out of sight.* BARBARA *and* TRUMBULL *have listened. They laugh gently at* COL. NEGLY. *Then* BARBARA *sits on the top step again and holds out her hand to* TRUMBULL.

BARBARA. [*Softly.*] Thank you.

TRUMBULL. [*Standing before her.*] *If he is a spy* —

BARBARA. Who?

TRUMBULL. [*Meaningly.*] *If he is a spy*, you must keep him prisoner or make him do no spy's work this visit, for my sake.

BARBARA. What do you know?

TRUMBULL. I saw your brother enter.

BARBARA. On my honor, he's not a spy!

TRUMBULL. Good! for him and me!

[*He sits on the steps below her.*

BARBARA. Oh, what a pity *you* are what you are!

TRUMBULL. Oh, thank you!

BARBARA. You know what I mean. My father's a Rebel, my brother's a Rebel, I'm a Rebel, and you —

TRUMBULL. I'm —

BARBARA. You're a *Yankee!*

TRUMBULL. Is that all?

BARBARA. No — [*Teasingly.*] You're handsome!

TRUMBULL. [*Terribly embarrassed.*] Miss Frietchie — please!

BARBARA. Of course, for a Yankee, I mean — handsome *for a Yankee!*

TRUMBULL. But —

BARBARA. [*Interrupting.*] And you're rather nice — *for a Yankee!* They've finished with the Neglys.

[*She rises, and* TRUMBULL *also. As the Provost Guard comes out of the Negly house and down the steps,* COL. NEGLY *has followed them out and is seen smoking furiously on his steps.*

TRUMBULL. The old gentleman is smoking like a house on fire. [*Both laugh gently.*

TRUMBULL. By the way, Sergeant, have you heard anything of those two men who deserted last week from my regiment?

SERGEANT. [*Turning to him.*] What men, Captain?

TRUMBULL. Fred Gelwex and Tim Greene.

SERGEANT. Oh, Gelwex and Greene. No, sir. Heard nothing *good*, sir.

TRUMBULL. They haven't been caught?

SERGEANT. *No*, Captain; but they swore before they cleared out to pay you back some day, sir.

TRUMBULL. They were both a bad lot, — always drunk. They're a good riddance.

SERGEANT. It's believed they're off to join the Rebels at Hagerstown, sir.

TRUMBULL. The Rebels are welcome.

[*Turning back to* BARBARA.

SERGEANT. Yes, Captain. [*Salutes, turns to his men.*] March!

[*The* SERGEANT *and soldiers pass on down the street to search the other houses.*

BARBARA. Would you fight for *our* side?

TRUMBULL. [*Very quietly.*] No.

BARBARA. Not even for *my* sake, not if I *begged* you?

TRUMBULL. [*Still quietly.*] No!

BARBARA. And yet you pretend to care for me?

TRUMBULL. [*Seizing the chance to tease a little himself.*] What makes you think so?

BARBARA. Oh, you —

TRUMBULL. Yankee!

BARBARA. Yes. No Rebel would have been rude enough to take that advantage of me! But I'll tell you how you can make up for it.

TRUMBULL. How?

BARBARA. By telling me outright what you *do* think of me.

TRUMBULL. Oh, no, no! I *daren't!*

BARBARA. [*Uneasy.*] Why not?

TRUMBULL. You haven't told me what you thought of me.

BARBARA. Yes, I have; that you were very, very nice — for a Yankee!

TRUMBULL. Well then, I think you are very, *very* adorable — for a Rebel.

BARBARA. Oh, I'm tired of hearing so much of Rebel and Yankee!

TRUMBULL. Good! So am I. Would *you* be a Yankee for my sake?

BARBARA. [*Angry.*] What! against the South? My South! How dare you ask me that?

TRUMBULL. It's no more than you asked me!

BARBARA. But the North is wrong; the South is right!

TRUMBULL. Oh!

BARBARA. You are the aggressive party. We only ask to be left alone!

TRUMBULL. Left alone to do what you shouldn't.

BARBARA. We don't acknowledge any authority of yours to dictate to us what is right and wrong.

TRUMBULL. You think it right to own slaves?

BARBARA. Yes! There isn't a darkey on our place who doesn't love us, and we love them.

TRUMBULL. You hold it right to buy and sell human flesh, to take the young child from its mother, the wife from her husband —

BARBARA. [*Interrupting.*] How dare you repeat those things to me?

TRUMBULL. I speak the truth. Here, in this very house —

BARBARA. [*More angry.*] Stop! I won't listen. Not to those blackguard lies from Union papers!

TRUMBULL. Ah! you know what I say is true.

BARBARA. [*Rising, furious.*] No, lies! lies! *Confound all* you Yankee liars!

TRUMBULL. [*Rising.*] Miss Frietchie —

BARBARA. The South! I'd die for her! And *you* ask me if I'd give her up, — you, with your Northern lies about her! You've seen the flag-post on our house. There used to fly from it an American flag, given my grandfather by Thomas Jefferson; but, when *this war* broke out, we tore it down in rags!

TRUMBULL. Good night.

BARBARA. [*Still angry.*] Good night! [TRUM-

BULL *goes up the street angrily, firmly.* BARBARA *goes to the side of the steps, and, leaning over, whispers timidly:*] Captain Trumbull — [TRUMBULL *reaches the Royce corner without turning.* BARBARA *repeats in a whisper, a more coaxing one:*] Captain Trumbull — [*He hesitates a moment, and then, turning, comes toward her slowly, expecting her to speak. He comes beside the steps. She stands on the top one, leaning against the column of the balcony.*] "'Tis but thy name that is my enemy!"

TRUMBULL. [*With his two arms leaning against the railing, not yet understanding that it is a quotation.*] That's right, Miss Frietchie.

BARBARA. "What's in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet; so Romeo would were he not Romeo called."

TRUMBULL. [*Delighted, recognizing the lines now.*] By George! yes, that's it! You and I — Romeo and Juliet!

BARBARA. But Romeo promised to forswear his name for Juliet.

TRUMBULL. I don't blame him if Juliet were a "Rebel!"

BARBARA. Then you will forswear yours?

TRUMBULL. Oh, no!

BARBARA. Then Romeo was no *Yankee!*

TRUMBULL. He was a lover, that's enough, — and so am I! But don't let us be like those unlucky duffers. Let us live and be happy, in spite of the War. You do love me a little, Barbara?

BARBARA. [*Leaning over and giving him her hand.*] Come back up on the steps!

[*Keeping hold of her hand, he comes around the railing and joins her.*

TRUMBULL. [*Pointing up.*] You see that star?

BARBARA. [*Laughing, shakes her head at him.*] Oh, no! no you don't! Nearly every man in Frederick has tried to show me that star!

TRUMBULL. No, I wasn't going to play a trick. I don't want kisses I have to steal from you.

BARBARA. Oh, dear me! Aren't you particular about your old kisses!

TRUMBULL. Barbara, *will* you kiss me?

BARBARA. No!

TRUMBULL. Ah! Barbara, will you *marry* me?

BARBARA. What?

TRUMBULL. Will you be my wife?

BARBARA. [*After a decided pause, trying to turn from him, not daring to look into his face, lets him seize her hand, and then turns impulsively, lifts her eyes, which are wet, to his, and smiling, whispers:*] Yes! [*He holds her close in his arms for a moment.*

Then she raises her head, and, half playfully, speaks to him.] Step down — only one step! [*He steps down one step.*] Do *you* see that star?

[*Pointing.*

TRUMBULL. Where?

[*Looking up.*

BARBARA. There! [*Kissing him.*] I *like* stolen kisses best!

TRUMBULL. [*Again taking her into his arms.*] My little *Rebel!* *My* Rebel!

BARBARA. Yes, my *Yankee love, my soldier!* Still a Rebel, though I'll be your wife. I've fought against it all I could. I've been silly and wilful and frivolous with you, but you saw behind my woman's barricade!

[*She sits on the top step.*

TRUMBULL. Yes, I saw *you!*

[*Sitting on the step below her, and taking both her hands in his.*

BARBARA. I love you! I've tried not to, but a love like mine must rule even in the heart it dwells in. I think its only master can be God. For, though I love my father dearly, dearly! though I love my brother second best, and love this house where mother taught me everything I know — including prayers — and love this town — the very bricks of the streets through which I've wandered into girlhood — and Maryland and all the South, the blessed, sweet, dear South, — still you, you Northerner — you *Yankee!* — you, my soldier lover — I love *you most!*

[*He embraces her; she rests in his arms.* FRIETCHIE, *coming along the street, reaches the Negly house, and is observed by* COL. NEGLY, *who rises.*

COL. NEGLY. Is that you, Frietchie?

[*The lovers start apart, and, rising, listen.*

FRIETCHIE. [*A handsome old gentleman, with fine face and sympathetic manner. He is such a man as Stuart would have loved to paint; a noble character, but a poor politician; stubborn but human.*] Yes. Have you heard the Northerners are in possession of Hagerstown, too, but our men are going to try and take it back!

[BARBARA *and* TRUMBULL *close the front door, and stand again in the dim light.*

COL. NEGLY. Come up here. That isn't *all* the Northerners are taking! There's something you must keep out of their hands, Frietchie! Come up.

[FRIETCHIE *joins* COL. NEGLY *on his steps.*

TRUMBULL. Trouble in Hagerstown! I shall have to go.

BARBARA. No!

[*Putting her hand upon his arm.*

TRUMBULL. [*Kissing her hand.*] Yes!

FRIETCHIE. Well, what's your news?

COL. NEGLY. [*Clearing his throat.*] It's a delicate matter. [*He hesitates.*

BARBARA. [*Softly to* TRUMBULL.] I know,— Sally told me; it's about us.

COL. NEGLY. After all, if you don't mind, I'd rather tell you inside. It's about the man over there on your steps.

FRIETCHIE. [*Looking, but it is too dark to see.*] With Barbara?

COL. NEGLY. [*Strong.*] Yes!

FRIETCHIE. Captain Trumbull?

COL. NEGLY. Yes, damn him!

FRIETCHIE. By thunder, you're right! I won't have it!

[*The two couples are heard in the distance coming back from their walk. They are singing "Listen to the Mocking Bird."*

COL. NEGLY. The whole town's excited over it. Let's talk it over inside.

[*They enter the Negly house.* TRUMBULL *whistles.*

BARBARA. Exactly! Whistle for me, too! Here come the girls. They've been for a walk.

[SALLY *and* EDGAR, LAURA *and* HAL, *both couples arm in arm, come along the street, past the Negly house. As they reach the Frietchie steps,* TRUMBULL *rises.*

SALLY. We've had a beautiful —

[*She stops as she sees the figure of* TRUMBULL.

BARBARA. Sit down!

LAURA. [*Coming up behind* SALLY.] Of course, we're dead tir —

[*Breaking off as she sees the Union officer.*

SALLY. [*Very pointedly.*] Excuse me — who's with you, Barbara?

BARBARA. Captain Trumbull.

LAURA. That Yankee!

[*She lifts her skirts away, and draws back almost to the curbstone.*

SALLY. *Excuse me!*

[*Following* LAURA'S *example.*

EDGAR. Good night, Barbara!

SALLY. [*At the same time.*] Good evening!

LAURA. Good evening!

[*They continue on up the street, singing "Dixie" with marked emphasis, the girls tossing their heads high in the air as they pass* TRUMBULL, *turning at the corner to fling back "Dixie" in his face.*

BARBARA. My friends are polite!

TRUMBULL. And your father?

BARBARA. Oh, father won't be like that!

TRUMBULL. No?

BARBARA. No, he'll be worse!

TRUMBULL. Worse?

BARBARA. Oh, father'll be something awful!

TRUMBULL. But *you'll* persuade him?

BARBARA. Perhaps — in time.

TRUMBULL. In time? *To-night!*

BARBARA. To-night?

TRUMBULL. I mean to ask him to-night!

BARBARA. No, no! You'll never dare!

TRUMBULL. Oh, yes, I will. I may be off to Hagerstown to fight in the morning, and I won't leave here without telling your father. I'll not give him a chance to say I stole your heart on the sly, and was afraid or ashamed to ask for it outright.

[COL. NEGLY *and* FRIETCHIE *come out of Negly's house. Both are excited.*

FRIETCHIE. Come over and hear me. I'll give him his *congé* to-night! Now!

[*They come down the steps and go to Frietchie's house.*

BARBARA. He's coming over. Not now! not now!

TRUMBULL. Yes, now!

BARBARA. [*Giving him her hand.*] Then I'll stand by you.

[*She drops his hand, however, as* COL. NEGLY *and* FRIETCHIE *reach the steps.*

FRIETCHIE. Good evening, daughter. Sir!

BARBARA. [*Interrupts.*] Captain Trumbull, father!

FRIETCHIE. Sir!

TRUMBULL. [*Interrupts.*] Good evening, sir!

FRIETCHIE. Sir! Allow me a word!

TRUMBULL. [*Interrupting.*] Pardon me!

Good evening, Colonel Negly. [COL. NEGLY *snorts*. *To* FRIETCHIE.] You were about to say, sir?

FRIETCHIE. I was about to say, sir, in the politest terms I am able to master, that the door of my house from to-night on is shut to you, sir. My daughter nor no one in my house is at home to you, sir — not to you nor to any other damned Yankee! Have I made myself clear, Negly, or has my effort at politeness concealed my meaning?

COL. NEGLY. No, sir, you have voiced all our sentiments clearly.

BARBARA. But, father?

FRIETCHIE. I've not addressed you, Barbara. Go in the house.

BARBARA. I won't!

TRUMBULL. [*Coming down a step.*] Is your prejudice merely based upon my being a Union officer?

FRIETCHIE. I cannot parley words with you, sir. My prejudice is fixed and unalterable. If you are a gentleman, what I have said ought to be sufficient!

TRUMBULL. No, sir, being a gentleman, I resent —

COL. NEGLY. [*Interrupts.*] *You resent*, sir?

TRUMBULL. I am not on *your steps*, Colonel Negly.

COL. NEGLY. No, thank God!

TRUMBULL. May I have a word with you in private, Mr. Frietchie?

FRIETCHIE. No, sir! I will be obliged to you if you will consider this interview is terminated, sir!

COL. NEGLY. Right, Frietchie!

TRUMBULL. That cannot be, sir, until I tell you that — [*a pause*] I love your daughter! [*He waits for the exclamation he expects from the*

two men, but both start back in silence, too stunned to make a sound.] I love your daughter, and have asked her to-night to be my wife!

FRIETCHIE. What!

TRUMBULL. To be my wife!

COL. NEGLY. [*With great emphasis.*] No, siree!

TRUMBULL. [*To* COL. NEGLY.] I am not asking *you* for *your* daughter, sir!

COL. NEGLY. No, thank God!

FRIETCHIE. Never! Do you hear me! Give him his answer, Barbara!

BARBARA. I have already!

FRIETCHIE. [*To* TRUMBULL.] Wasn't that enough, sir?

TRUMBULL. [*After a quick look exchanged with* BARBARA.] Quite!

BARBARA. [*Taking* TRUMBULL'S *hand.*] I said *yes*, father!

FRIETCHIE. What! You said yes? You'd give yourself to this Yankee nobody, who comes here to rob you of all you have, make your father penniless, and take your very brother's life, if he can? No! [*He seizes her wrist and drags her hand out of* TRUMBULL'S.] I'd sooner give you to the first Confederate deserter that came crawling along the road, and feel surer of your happiness! Go into the house!

BARBARA. *No*, father!

TRUMBULL. Your insult I pass over, sir, for your daughter's sake!

FRIETCHIE. [To BARBARA.] Do as I bid you; go to your own room! Your father will take care of you, in spite of yourself. [*She goes into the house, with a meaning look at* TRUMBULL, *who makes a movement toward her, stopped by* FRIETCHIE.] Come in, too, Negly.

[COL. NEGLY *goes into the house, giving a loud snort as he passes* TRUMBULL.

TRUMBULL. [*To* FRIETCHIE.] Sir, if you wish credentials of my character and family —

FRIETCHIE. [*Turns on top step and looks fiercely at* TRUMBULL.] Damn you, sir, good night!

[*Enters house and slams the door.*

COL. NEGLY. [*Opening the door on a crack.*] And damn your family, too, sir!

[*Shuts the door.* TRUMBULL *stands a moment undecided. The shutters above, leading on to the balcony, softly open. An* ORDERLY *comes quickly around the Royce corner, and, going to* TRUMBULL, *salutes him.* TRUMBULL *returns the salute.* BARBARA *comes softly out into the moonlight on the balcony.*

ORDERLY. [*Who speaks with some force, and suppressed excitement.*] Orders to break and start

for Hagerstown at daybreak, Captain, to reinforce General Reno!

TRUMBULL. Very well. I'll be with the men at once.

ORDERLY. General Lee is advancing with his whole army. Expectations of heavy fighting early in the morning!

TRUMBULL. That's bad news, Perkins.

ORDERLY. Yes, sir.

[*Salutes and goes down the street quickly.* TRUMBULL *turns, about to follow him, but stops to take a farewell look at* BARBARA'S *house. He sees* BARBARA *on the balcony.*

BARBARA. Pst! [*Leaning over, she whispers.*] More Romeo and Juliet!

TRUMBULL. [*Going nearer and standing under the side of the balcony.*] Yes.

BARBARA. To-morrow!

TRUMBULL. [*Eagerly.*] To-morrow! [*His voice*

changes suddenly as he realizes.] To-morrow! — I'm off to Hagerstown at daybreak!

BARBARA. [*Disappointed.*] Hagerstown at daybreak?

FRIETCHIE. [*In the house.*] Barbara!

BARBARA. [*Over her shoulder, looking back.*] Yes, father! [*She turns again to* TRUMBULL *and leans far over.*] Listen! I know the Lutheran minister there! I'll be at his house at noon. I'll marry you all the same!

[*She unfastens the camellia at her waist, kisses it, and throws the flower down to him; then hurries into the house. Just as* TRUMBULL *catches the flower, a distant bugle call is heard. He thrusts the camellia into his coat, wheels about sharply, and goes on straight down the street, turning the Royce corner without looking back again, as*

THE CURTAIN FALLS

THE SECOND ACT

The Lutheran Minister's House in Hagerstown

A pleasant-looking room, whose walls are covered with large flowered, green striped paper; faded strong green rep curtains are at the windows, and the rosewood furniture is somewhat uninvitingly covered with haircloth. A bright, big figured carpet is on the floor. A stand of geraniums in bloom is between the windows, and a canary bird in a cage sings intermittently in one. There are two family portraits on the walls, one of Mrs. Hunter, *at the age of six, with a small head and a large hoop, leaning against a marble column that supports a blue but cloudy sky, and a big,*

troublesome red curtain; the other portrait, of her father, done by an itinerant artist in exchange for a suit of well-worn clothes, does not admit of description. There are some interesting family photographs in round gilt and black frames. There is a white marble-topped centre table, with a lamp upon it, on a worsted mat, and a dozen freshly-made glasses of currant jelly standing to get cool. There are two walnut "what-nots" in the room, boasting of sea shells, small statuettes and other like objets d'art *of the period. The clock upon the mantel, flanked by two vases of dyed, dry grasses, points to 11.30 of a sunny morning.* BARBARA *and* SUE *are seen passing quickly by the windows, and a minute after,* MRS. HUNTER *shows the two young ladies into her parlor.* MRS. HUNTER *is a sweet, placid looking woman, with gray hair in smooth*

bands. She is a motherly creature, and wears a plain morning cap on her head. BARBARA *and* SUE *are dressed in their very best, carrying fans and little parasols, and are happily excited.*

MRS. HUNTER. Come right in here, young ladies, and wait.

BARBARA. [*As she and* SUE *enter.*] *Thank you,* Mrs. Hunter.

MRS. HUNTER. Sit down. [BARBARA *sits on one side of the centre table,* SUE *on the other, both saying* "Thank you," *and always showing their only half-suppressed excitement.*] Make yourselves quite at home. How did you come over?

[*She sits behind the table, and, taking up a large family work-basket, begins to do some darning.*

BARBARA. Miss Royce's old colored man drove us over with their fast horses.

MRS. HUNTER. You must be tired!

BARBARA. Oh, no! not a bit! Are we, Sue?

SUE. Well, I don't suppose *you* are, but *I* am!

MRS. HUNTER. I expect the Minister back every minute. He's out after news. We heard the Confederate troops were going to try and retake Hagerstown to-day. How's your pa?

[*Pronounced "paw."*]

BARBARA. He was very well this morning, thank you, Mrs. Hunter, but I'm afraid he won't be at all well this afternoon.

[*Exchanging a meaning look with* SUE, *she goes nervously to the window and looks out.*

SUE. If he don't lose his mind altogether, like poor Jack Negly, it'll be a godsend!

MRS. HUNTER. You don't mean Colonel Negly's son?

SUE. Yes, he's been *queer* for a long time. But goodness! since Barbara jilted him —

BARBARA. [*Turning about at the window, tries to stop her.*] Sue!

[*She turns her head again to look out of the window.*

SUE. Well, you know what I mean! Barbara won't have him, Mrs. Hunter, and this morning —

BARBARA. Sue!

[*Coming back to behind* MRS. HUNTER.

SUE. Well, he behaved in the craziest kind of a way, and he's trying his best to get out of Frederick and enlist in our Army! His own mother says it's a crime; that he ought to be shut up in an asylum. And Colonel Negly's turned against Barbara on account of it!

MRS. HUNTER. Is that what you've come to see Mr. Hunter for?

BARBARA. [*More excited.*] Not exactly!

[*She and* SUE *laugh nervously.*

MRS. HUNTER. [*Embarrassed.*] Excuse me for asking —

BARBARA. [*Leaning over* SUE'S *shoulder.*] Shall I tell her?

[*Anxious to.*

SUE. Why not? You've told everybody you've seen!

BARBARA. I've come to see Mr. Hunter about a wedding.

MRS. HUNTER. Good gracious! not your pa again?

BARBARA. No, indeedy!

MRS. HUNTER. [*Relieved.*] I was going to say he's had *two* and —

BARBARA. [*Interrupting.*] No, it's *my* wedding to a Yankee officer!

MRS. HUNTER. [*Rising.*] For land's sake! will wonders never cease! When?

BARBARA. This morning. Hasn't he been here, or sent a note?

MRS. HUNTER. Not that I know of. Bless me, I *must* red up a bit! [*Going about the room and straightening the furniture and dusting the "what-nots."*] Dreadfully sorry I made currant jelly this morning and set it cooling here on the centre table. Don't dare move it, for fear it's begun to jell! Too bad! Does your pa know?

BARBARA. [*Following her.* SUE *goes to the window.*] No!

MRS. HUNTER. You're running away?

[BARBARA *nods her head a little timidly.*

BARBARA. Yes, sort of — something of that sort!

MRS. HUNTER. He's against it?

[BARBARA *nods her head again, more emphatically.*

MRS. HUNTER. [*Blowing dust off the mantel shelf.*] You oughtn't to go against your pa, dear.

BARBARA. I can't help it. You'll be a witness all the same, won't you, Mrs. Hunter?

[*Putting her arm coaxingly about her.*

MRS. HUNTER. Well, my dear, it's all very well *my* consenting to be a witness, but I doubt very much if the Minister'll marry you!

BARBARA. [*With her arm still around* MRS. HUNTER, *and hugging her coaxingly.*] Oh, Mrs. Hunter, why not?

MRS. HUNTER. What ever will your pa say?

BARBARA. [*Taking her arm away.*] Nothing proper for *me* to repeat, I am sure! But he's not a judge of whom I must love, Mrs. Hunter.

[*Coming to behind the centre table again.*

MRS. HUNTER. Yes, but I'm afraid the Minister'll think it wrong. He's got a strong sense of duty.

[*Coming also to the table.*

BARBARA. [*Sits behind the table, leaning on her arms, and almost crying.*] Oh, no, Mrs. Hunter, you don't think he'd refuse me *a little thing like that?* After I've come all this way just to see him!

MRS. HUNTER. Well, my dear, if the Minister's wife could marry you, there wouldn't be any difficulty. But you see that wouldn't be legal!

BARBARA. What a pity!

MRS. HUNTER. Anyway, I'll just change my cap, so as to be ready in case he *is* willing. [*Sits absent-mindedly.*] My! you've that flustered me! [*Rising again.*] I hope he's a good man, Miss Barbara.

[*Going toward the hall door on the left side of the room.*

BARBARA. Wait and see. You'll want to marry him yourself!

MRS. HUNTER. [*Smiling.*] Heaven forbid! I'm not like your pa!

[*She goes out.* BARBARA *runs to the window, where* SUE *is.*

BARBARA. [*Looking out with* SUE, *both their backs toward the room.*] Is he coming?

SUE. No, but something seems to be going on. Don't you see all the people?

BARBARA. No! So long as I don't see *him*, I don't see *anybody!*

SUE. [*Motioning.*] Look! There are lots of soldiers hurrying about. Perhaps one is he.

BARBARA. *He* isn't a *soldier; he's* a *captain!*

SUE. [*Turning to* BARBARA.] Oh, what a fine tail our cat's got! But perhaps he'll be too busy and can't come.

BARBARA. He'll come! It's early yet.

[*Going to look at the clock on the mantel.*

SUE. Yes, and a nice, modest bride you are — coming half an hour too soon! [*Leaning out of the window, she calls.*] Boy! boy! Come in the garden a minute!

BARBARA. Are you going to send him for Captain Trumbull?

SUE. Hardly! Boy! [*In a lower voice, showing the boy is in the garden and within hearing.*] What's the matter?

BOY. [*Outside, excitedly.*] The Rebs are coming to take back the town from the Yankees! They're only a mile now down the pike. You can see them from the roof of your house!

BARBARA. [*Hurrying to the other window.*] Where'll they fight?

BOY. Everybody says here first, probably!

SUE. [*Coming from the window.*] *Here!* Oh, Barbara, let's get away!

BARBARA. [*Coming to her.*] Without being married? No, indeed!

BOY'S VOICE. [*In the distance.*] Hi! You'd better shut your shutters!

SUE. [*Follows* BARBARA.] But *I'm* not going to be married!

BARBARA. Well, I *am*, even if drums must play my wedding march!

SUE. Supposing Captain Trumbull can't come here?

BARBARA. He'll come!

SUE. He may be needed to defend the town. He'll have to fight. [*Goes to the window again.*

BARBARA. He'll have to get married first, and then, if he has to fight, he'll have a wife's kisses on his lips, and a wife's love in his heart to charm away the bullets, and a wife's *prayers* going up to Heaven for him!

SUE. [*At the window.*] Here he comes!

[*Comes back to* BARBARA.

BARBARA. I knew it! [*They become very nervous and excited.*] Oh, Sue, I hope he won't think me too — too — too something, for being here so much before him!

SUE. [*Amused, teasing her.*] Of course, Bab, it is *more customary* for the bridegroom to await the arrival of the bride!

BARBARA. Oh, Sue, do you think *he'll* think — [*Looking about her.*] I wish there were another door; I'd go out and come back again, as if I'd just arrived. Wait! I've an idea. Hurry, take my arm! We'll pretend he's late and that I was tired of waiting and we're about to go! Pretend we thought the hour fixed was half-past eleven. Don't forget, Sue, *half-past eleven!*

TRUMBULL. [*In the hall outside.*] In the parlor, — thank you.

BARBARA. I shall be very haughty with him! [*Very loud to* SUE, *pointedly.*] Come, dear. *We won't wait any longer; it's unpardonable!*

[CAPT. TRUMBULL *enters.*

TRUMBULL. Barbara!

[*Holding out both his hands.*

BARBARA. [*Rushing to him and giving him both hers, cries out joyfully:*] Will! I thought you'd never come. The time was *noon*, you know!

TRUMBULL. I've been getting a license, hunting up the Minister, and begging him to take the time to marry us.

BARBARA. I knew you'd manage it. You see, Sue!

[*Turning to* SUE, *whom* TRUMBULL *then sees.*

TRUMBULL. Our bridesmaid?

[*Shaking hands with* SUE.

SUE. [*With a quick little curtsey.*] Yes, indeedy!

BARBARA. And you *persuaded* Mr. Hunter *to* marry us?

TRUMBULL. I think so. You see, he knows my people in Connecticut. At any rate, he said he'd follow me in a few minutes. We haven't many. You won't mind being married in a hurry?

[*Taking her hand.*

BARBARA. It's true, the Southerners are coming?

TRUMBULL. [*Letting go, tenderly, of* BARBARA'S *hand.*] Yes, we are filling the houses along the street with sharpshooters. Men of the Seventy-fourth Connecticut, my regiment, are to take their stand in this house.

SUE. Here!

BARBARA. This house!

TRUMBULL. Doctor Hunter is out, warning women and children to keep out of danger. I

would have sent you word not to come to-day had I known in time.

SUE. [*On a half cry.*] Oh, I wish you had! I wish we were home!

BARBARA. *I* should have come all the same. My place is here, as near you as I can be, with your life in danger!

TRUMBULL. But all you women in the house must go into the cellar; that's the only place that will be safe from bullets.

[*During this speech,* SUE *steals softly from the room, to leave the other two alone.*

BARBARA. And *you?* Oh, my love, my love! [*Resting quietly in his arms, her head on his shoulder, and looking up into his face.*] You'll be in the fighting —

TRUMBULL. The Seventy-fourth shall behave worthy of their Captain's wife, if I can make them.

BARBARA. But *you!* Oh, just as you are *mine!* If you should be — should be —

[*She cannot say the dreadful thing, and comes out of his arms, but keeps close to him, burying her face on his shoulder.*

TRUMBULL. Be brave, dear. If it should be, I'll fall, loving you and trying to serve my country!

BARBARA. *Your* country against *mine!*

TRUMBULL. No. *Our* country! North and South were one in *1776*. They'll be one again in *1876*.

BARBARA. Yes, in 1776 they were betrothed. This War's a lovers' quarrel; after it, they'll *wed* for good, like you and I to-day.

TRUMBULL. And then *nothing can separate* them.

BARBARA. Not even death! [*Resting again in his arms, he kisses her silently. After a moment's*

pause, she moves to a chair, and, still holding his hand, makes him draw a chair nearer and sit beside her.] Will, yesterday I told you I was still a Rebel, after all your reasoning.

TRUMBULL. But still *my* Rebel!

BARBARA. All night I lay awake and tried to take your point of view, and by the morning —

TRUMBULL. By the morning —

BARBARA. By the morning it was easier. Perhaps — perhaps we're wrong. But still I'm torn between the two — you whom I love best on one side; everything else I love stands on the other — and this War, this cruel War blackens our skies with its powder clouds, stains our grass with our own heart's blood, destroys our homes, and ruins the land we cherish! What can we women do? My brother escaped to-day, and will be with our — with his troops — when they march into

Hagerstown this morning. His gun points toward *your* heart, *yours* toward *his!*

TRUMBULL. God save his life!

BARBARA. And yours! See! [*Rising.* TRUMBULL *rises. She takes an old, patched American flag from a little beaded bag at her side.*] This is the flag I told you of last night; my grandfather's!

TRUMBULL. Yes, I remember; but you told me it was *torn.*

BARBARA. It was. I mended it at sunrise. Then I folded it as you see, close and small as I could, and I give it to you, my Yankee soldier, for a wedding gift. But you must let me place it here. [*Slipping it inside his coat, on the left side.*] Over your heart, your wife's flag, and may it be some sort of shield to save your life for her!

[MRS. HUNTER *and* SUE *come in again.* MRS. HUNTER *has changed her cap and added a white lace "bertha." She brings a bouquet of flowers, which she has gathered in her garden for* BARBARA.

MRS. HUNTER. I don't know where Doctor Hunter can be, but I'm quite ready. Good morning, Captain Trumbull. [*Giving flowers to* BARBARA *and kissing her.*] My love and good wishes.

BARBARA. Thank you, Mrs. Hunter.

MRS. HUNTER. Take off your bonnet, dearie. It's bad luck to wed in the house in a bonnet.

[*Taking* BARBARA'S *bonnet, she drops it.*

BARBARA. Oh, be careful of it, Mrs. Hunter! I hadn't a new one of my own, so I borrowed this one of Sue. You know, "Something old and something new, something borrowed and something blue."

MRS. HUNTER. This is a sad way for a young girl to be married.

[*Putting* BARBARA'S *bonnet on the sofa.*

TRUMBULL. Barbara *is a soldier's bride*, Mrs. Hunter, and she's going to be brave.

[SUE *goes to* BARBARA, *sobbing.*

SUE. Oh, Bab! Bab!

[*She cries on her neck.*

BARBARA. Sue! Sue! You'll be a nice damp bridesmaid! [*Putting her away affectionately.*

MRS. HUNTER. [*Taking* SUE *to the window, where they discreetly pretend to be interested in the garden, with their backs turned.*] Come, sit down!

TRUMBULL. [*Taking* BARBARA'S *hand and drawing her to one side.*] I had no time to get another, so I'm going to use my mother's wedding ring. She put it on my finger when I was twenty-one.

[*Showing her a narrow, well-worn ring.*

BARBARA. [*Tenderly, looking at the ring.*] No ring in the world would have pleased me half so much.

[*A loud, harsh church bell suddenly begins to clang noisily.*

MRS. HUNTER. [*Startled, rises.*] What's that for?

TRUMBULL. To warn the townspeople that there's likely to be fighting.

[SUE *rises, frightened.*

SUE. Oh, Bab!

[SUE *and* MRS. HUNTER *come a few steps forward.*

TRUMBULL. There's no danger yet, Miss Royce.

[MRS. HUNTER *goes to a window and looks out.* SUE *follows. As* TRUMBULL *has given his answer to* MRS. HUNTER, BARBARA *has clung more tightly to him, and, turning her face up*

to his, gives him a long look, full of love, but yet fearful for the ordeal ahead.

MRS. HUNTER. [*Coming away from the window.*] Here comes somebody; it's probably the Minister!

BARBARA. The Minister!

TRUMBULL. The Minister!

SUE. The Minister!

[*Lively excitement on the part of* BARBARA. *She runs, tripping prettily about the room, to make all kinds of unnecessary preparations.*

BARBARA. Get ready, everybody! The Bible! We must have the Bible!

[*Taking a large book from the table between the windows.*

MRS. HUNTER. No! no! that's the photograph album! [*Taking it away from her.*] However, you won't need a Bible.

BARBARA. [*Laughing hysterically.*] Won't need it? Dear me! Mrs. Hunter says we won't need —

[*She interrupts herself to arrange the little party. She changes* SUE'S *position several times to where she will look "really best," and gets very confused as to which side of* CAPT. TRUMBULL *she shall stand, but finally gives a sigh of relief, as, after a final dash for her almost forgotten bouquet, with flushed cheeks, happy eyes and beating heart, she hangs on to the* CAPTAIN'S *left arm, and watches expectantly the hall door open. They stand on the Right,* SUE *beside* BARBARA, *and* MRS. HUNTER *behind the centre table. An* ORDERLY *bursts into the room.*

ORDERLY. Captain Trumbull?

[*Salutes.*

TRUMBULL. What is it, Perkins?

ORDERLY. Sent by General Reno to tell you to join your company with all speed, sir! The enemy are only a few yards off, and our troops are to leave this end of the town open to them!

[BARBARA'S *bouquet slips unheeded from her hand.*

MRS. HUNTER. Leave this end? What's that for?

TRUMBULL. A trap, probably. We outnumber the Rebels. Coming, Perkins.

ORDERLY. Yes, Captain. I've a horse here for you.

[*Salutes and goes out.*

BARBARA. [*Going to her* CAPTAIN.] You *must* go? Without — you can't wait for Mr. Hunter?

TRUMBULL. *He* must wait for *us to-morrow.* Good-by.

[*They stand facing each other, his arms around*

her, her hands on his shoulders, — and look long, lovingly and fearfully into each other's eyes.

MRS. HUNTER. [*Going to* SUE, *whispers.*] Come.

[*Leads her by the hand to the window, where they stand, half hidden by the curtains, their backs turned toward the room. The bell stops ringing. After* BARBARA *and* TRUMBULL *have gazed a few moments into each other's eyes, he takes the ring he had shown her off his finger, and places it on* BARBARA'S *wedding finger, and then kisses it on her hand. She flings her arms about his neck and kisses him.*

TRUMBULL. [*Firmly.*] I must go now.

BARBARA. [*Clinging to him.*] Yes, yes; I know, I know!

[*Following him toward the door, and holding on to him.*

TRUMBULL. Good-by, little woman.

[*Putting off her hands, tenderly.*

BARBARA. [*In an agonized whisper.*] Good-by. Your wife all the same, Will; your wife, your wife!

[*Again putting her hands upon his arm.*

TRUMBULL. Yes, my wife! Take care of yourself.

BARBARA. And you?

TRUMBULL. I'm going to make you proud of the Seventy-fourth!

[*Smiling bravely and again putting her hands tenderly from off him.*

BARBARA. I know it. I know it!

TRUMBULL. Good-by. [*Again clinging to his arm, she starts to go with him out through the door.*] No, stay here. Don't come any further. Every minute makes it harder. [*She stands still. He*

goes over the threshold. He turns and looks at her.] Good-by, *girl!* [*He passes out.*

BARBARA. [*Standing in front of the open door.*] Good-by, *boy!*

[*The outside door is heard to slam.* BARBARA *hurries to the empty window and leans out. She throws some kisses and stands watching.* MRS. HUNTER *and* SUE *turn from their window.*

SUE. Poor Bab!

MRS. HUNTER. Yes, indeedy! I suppose the Minister has just had to stay with the troops.

[BARBARA *turns and speaks quickly, coming from the window.*

BARBARA. Now, what can we do? Surely we can do something! We can help somehow!

MRS. HUNTER. I don't see what, just now. If any one gets wounded near here, we can —

BARBARA. [*Interrupting, and sobbing on* MRS. HUNTER'S *bosom.*] Oh, Mrs. Hunter, you're sure, you're sure there'll be fighting?

MRS. HUNTER. I've seen one skirmish already, dear, right here in our front yard.

[*Comforting her in her arms.*

SUE. [*At the window.*] Oh! Our men are coming now, sure; you can see the dust. Shall we close the shutters?

MRS. HUNTER. Yes, quickly!

[*Moving to the other window, she closes its shutters.* SUE *at the same time closes the shutters of her window. The sunlight goes from the room when this is done, leaving a dull, dark daylight.* BARBARA *stands motionless in the centre of the room, lost for the moment in her unhappy thoughts.*

MRS. HUNTER. [*Going to* SUE]. Would you

mind helping me put away some of my best things? If they should fight outside, everything's likely to be ruined.

[*Taking the pair of vases with dried grasses off the mantel, and also the clock.*

SUE. [*In a half whisper.*] Look at Barbara!

MRS. HUNTER. Let her alone, poor girl! and take off those tatting tidies, will you, Miss Royce, please? My Aunt Sarah made 'em, and I treasure 'em highly. [SUE *takes the tidies off the sofa and chairs, and gets the family Bible and photograph album.* MRS. HUNTER *moves the jelly jars to the mantel.*] These soldiers just don't care what they do. They'll use everything they can lay their hands on for the wounded, without a moment's forethought!

[*There is a loud rapping on the wooden shutter of one of the windows. The women are*

frightened. BARBARA *starts out of her reverie and goes to the window, but does not open it.*

BARBARA. What is it?

BOY. The Rebs are coming! the Rebs are coming! They're right here; there'll be fighting! Look out!

SUE. [*In hysterical fright.*] Oh, Barbara! oh, Mrs. Hunter! Oh, I wish I were home! I'll never go with you to get married again, Barbara Frietchie! Oh, we'll be killed! we'll all be killed!

MRS. HUNTER. [*Crossing with* SUE *to the hall door.*] No! no! Come, put those things downstairs! I'll lock the front door, and then we'd all better go into the cellar.

BARBARA. I shall stay here!

SUE. No, no, Bab!

MRS. HUNTER. You come now, Miss Royce.

I'll be back for Miss Barbara. I want to bolt the front door.

[SUE *and* MRS. HUNTER *go out of the room.*

BARBARA. [*Goes to the window, and, moving the shutter a little, looks out. She shows that she sees the Southern soldiers, and, closing the shutter quickly, calls back into the room.*] They're some of them here already in the street!

[*She looks out cautiously again. A loud knocking on the street door.* BARBARA *quickly closes the shutter and steps away from the window into the room. The knocking is repeated.* MRS. HUNTER *appears in the hall doorway, frightened.*

MRS. HUNTER. Some of 'em are at our door!

[*The knocking changes to pounding of the door with the butt end of a musket.*

ARTHUR FRIETCHIE. [*Voice loud outside.*] This

is the confounded Union Preacher's house. Beat in the door if they won't answer!

[*Louder pounding on the door.*

BARBARA. Hadn't we better open? Shall I go?

MRS. HUNTER. No, I'll go.

[*She goes out and is heard drawing a bolt.*

ARTHUR FRIETCHIE. [*Strides into the room, his arm in a sling, followed by four Confederate soldiers* — GELWEX, GREENE *and two others* — *speaking before and as he enters. The four men stand in twos by the windows.*] We want your house, madam, for our sharpshooters. We won't harm you or any of your possessions. [*He sees* BARBARA.] Barbara! No! Barbara?

BARBARA. [*Equally surprised.*] *You*, Arthur! Thank God! [*Taking his hand.* MRS. HUNTER *enters.*] Mrs. Hunter, this is my brother. He'll

protect us! Arthur, this is my friend, Mrs. Hunter.

ARTHUR FRIETCHIE. She's a Unioner. Her husband is known all over Maryland for his bitterness. What are you doing with them?

BARBARA. Oh, never mind; they are *my friends. You'll protect* them!

ARTHUR. I can do nothing.

BARBARA. Yes, you can. You won't let your men stay in the house.

ARTHUR. I must; superior orders!

BARBARA. But what are they going to do here?

ARTHUR. They're sharpshooters. They'll each take a window that fronts on the street.

MRS. HUNTER. Heaven help us! [*To* BARBARA.] I'll go tell your friend; she'll be getting frightened.

[*She goes out.* BARBARA, *dazed, sinks into a chair by the centre table.*

ARTHUR. The Yankees are up to some trick. They've left this part of the town open. They imagine, perhaps, we'll think they're retreating, and march along into the hell they have ready for us at the other end. But we're not such fools. We're going to wait here for them to come back after us!

BARBARA. Do you mean to say you're going to station your men in these windows, to hide here safe, and shoot out at the unprotected Unioners as they come along?

ARTHUR. Yes, we'll pick off their best as they come past first, till we've discouraged them a little.

BARBARA. [*Rising.*] No! no! That's barbarous! that's murder!

ARTHUR. It's war, sister! [*To his men.*] Clear the windows!

[*The men tear down the curtains and move into each window a big piece of furniture, which serves as an extra protection to hide behind.* GELWEX, *with one man at one window,* GREENE *and another man at the other.*

BARBARA. But *you, you'll* be *here?*

[*Following* ARTHUR *around the table as he moves, her hands on his arm.*

ARTHUR. No, I must go on at once. This isn't the only house!

BARBARA. And we women, what are we to do?

ARTHUR. Get out of reach of the bullets, for God's sake, and the sooner the better!

BARBARA. Sue's down in the cellar now.

ARTHUR. Sue! My Sue?

BARBARA. Yes, Sue Royce.

ARTHUR. If she should be hurt! What in Heaven's name are you two girls doing here? *Tell me!*

[*Very firmly.*

BARBARA. Ah! if you are frightened for her, because you love her, even though she isn't fighting, then you'll feel for *me!* Arthur, be generous. I came here this morning to *marry* Captain Trumbull!

ARTHUR. What! the Northern officer?

[GELWEX *starts and exchanges a signal with* GREENE. *They listen intently.*

BARBARA. [*Standing in front of* ARTHUR *to plead with him.*] Wait! Don't speak yet; you don't know him, you've never even *seen* him. How can you judge? He saved you

from the search gang last night, though you don't know it. He's a good, brave man, and he's here in the army you've come to *fight!* Oh, Arthur, he's as dear to me as you can be to Sue and she to you! Pity me! help me!

ARTHUR. [*Sympathetically.*] I can do nothing, Bab, poor old girl.

BARBARA. At any rate, you're not angry with me for loving him?

ARTHUR. [*With his arm about her shoulders.*] No, I'm sorry for you.

BARBARA. Shall I call Sue?

ARTHUR. Yes. No! no! you'd better not. I mustn't see her, — I don't dare. Give her this for me. [*Kisses her. He turns to his men.*] Gelwex. you and — What's your friend's name?

GREENE. [*Saluting.*] Tim Greene, sir.

ARTHUR. All right. You two stay here. This

is a good chance for you new men to show what you are worth to us. The other two follow me upstairs.

GELWEX. There ain't no upstairs, sir: only an attic.

BARBARA. This is only a minister's little cottage, you know.

ARTHUR. Very well, then; you men here are enough. [*He takes a step or two nearer the two men, one at each window.*] You know your work. *Look* where you fire! Pick out your man! Don't aim at nothing!

BARBARA. Oh, it's dreadful! it's dreadful!

ARTHUR. [*Coming back to her.*] Good-by, dear!

BARBARA. [*In agony.*] If you two meet — my lover and my brother!

ARTHUR. That *won't* be — that *can't* be!

We won't even think of it. [*She presses his hand warmly. He returns the pressure.*] And before another battle you must make a Rebel of him!

[BARBARA *smiles.* ARTHUR *goes.*

BARBARA. [*Speaks after him.*] Come back safely.

ARTHUR. I'll try. Take care of Sue.

[*He shuts the door behind him.* BARBARA *stands for a moment looking about her with the manner of one seeking some means, she knows not what, to avert an impending catastrophe. The two men have taken their positions in the left corners of each window, the shutters open on a crack, the men watching, off Right, the direction from which the Union men are to come.* BARBARA *looks at them.*

GELWEX. You're loaded all right, Tim?

GREENE. [*Looking.*] All right.

BARBARA. And you two men are going to carry out your orders?

GELWEX. Right, young lady, if we get the chance.

BARBARA. If I were a soldier, I'd fight out fair in the ranks. I wouldn't hide safe to kill another man from behind a cover!

[*The two soldiers laugh out loud.*

GELWEX. If you were a soldier, you'd do what you're told, Miss. [*He watches again, closing the shutters.*] Not that this ain't our favorite line in the business. Eh, Tim?

GREENE. [*Watching closely between his shutters.*] Ya-as!

BARBARA. [*Noticing their manner and accent.*] But where do you come from? You men are not Southern.

GELWEX. No, we *ain't* Southern, b'gosh! Be we, Tim?

BARBARA. You're Northerners?

GELWEX. The State of *Connecticut* had the *honor* of our birth.

BARBARA. [*In surprise.*] And you sympathize with the South?

GELWEX. [*Laughing sarcastically.*] *Yes, we sympathize with the South* because she pays us for it!

BARBARA. Pays!

GELWEX. The South's going to win, Miss, and we're on the side of the winning party. We come down here with the Seventy-fourth from Hartford. [*At this,* BARBARA *starts and looks at them in greater surprise and with emotion.*] And we got licked twice, so we quit.

BARBARA. [*In disgust.*] You're deserters!

GELWEX. Awh! call us what you like. Each man must look out for hisself. The Rebs pay well, and if it warn't for us they wouldn't be knowing the Yankees' plan to-day.

BARBARA. You betrayed your own —

[*She stops, more on her guard.*

GELWEX. Well, you ain't very grateful, Miss! We done it for your side. But why we done it is 'cause the South's going to win, and the winning side's our side! Eh, Tim?

GREENE. [*Who a moment before has looked out more intently, and listened.*] Psst!

GELWEX. [*At once on the alert.*] Coming? [BARBARA *stands still, motionless, alarmed.*] It's only some people in the street. By thunder, if our old regiment comes along! — eh, Tim?

BARBARA. [*To herself in a whisper.*] Will's!

GREENE. We'd pay 'em back!

GELWEX. You bet! I ain't forgot the day they done me up in camp with mud and stones.

GREENE. [*Strong.*] Right you are!

GELWEX. But listen. I choose Captain Trumbull, mind you!

GREENE. All right.

GELWEX. Let him go by *for me,* — he's *my target! I've* got the biggest score against him, and, by God! I'll fix him for them nights in the guard-house!

BARBARA. [*Quickly.*] Why were you in the guard-house?

GELWEX. Getting sober. I've a weakness, lady, for good old rye!

[*Laughing.*

BARBARA. [*As the idea strikes her.*] Well, rye is not a bad drink. Wouldn't you like some now?

GREENE. No!

GELWEX. Shut up! Yes, lady; thank you kindly.

BARBARA. [*Going to the door, calls.*] Mrs. Hunter, Mrs. Hunter!

MRS. HUNTER. [*In the hall.*] Yes, what is it? Do you need me? [*She enters.*

BARBARA. [*Going to her.*] Mrs. Hunter, does the Minister drink?

GELWEX. [*Laughs coarsely.*] Ha! ha! Does a fish swim?

[MRS. HUNTER *looks angrily at the soldiers.*

BARBARA. I want some whisky for this good fellow here.

MRS. HUNTER. [*Angry.*] No, indeedy! There's not a drop in the house.

GREENE. Sh! Listen, Fred!

[*He and* GELWEX *press closer to the windows.*

BARBARA *and* MRS. HUNTER *stand still a*

moment, listening. Then BARBARA *whispers so the two men won't hear her.*

BARBARA. I'm sure you have some; get it. These are two Union *deserters!* And the worse of the two is a drunkard. He's set on the life of my lover! Oh, for love's sake, get me liquor, so I may drug him!

MRS. HUNTER. I understand. We have some.

[*She starts to go out the door.*

BARBARA. And, Mrs. Hunter, has the Minister a gun?

MRS. HUNTER. Yes, but what for —?

BARBARA. Never mind. Get it! get it!

[MRS. HUNTER *goes out.*

GELWEX. Sh! Damn you! keep still. Yes, they're coming, sure!

BARBARA. Who?

GELWEX. The Yankees! [BARBARA *cries out.*]

Don't be frightened; they won't be on us for a few minutes yet. But you'd better go, too, lady.

[*The soldiers watch more closely. The bell begins to clang loudly again.*

BARBARA. No! Listen — listen to me a moment! Isn't there any way in which I can persuade you two men not to shoot out of those windows?

GELWEX. Oh, go down in the cellar!

BARBARA. No! For Heaven's sake, won't you show some kindness, some pity? Turn around and look at me! *Look at me!* [*Running to him and throwing herself upon his gun, which is pointed between the shutters. She holds it down for a moment.*] Look into my face! [GELWEX *turns his head and looks at her.*] *Now listen!* My life and happiness are coming down that road where your guns point!

GELWEX. That's nothing to do with me!

[*Wrenching his gun away, he turns again to aim out of the window.*

BARBARA. Have you no feeling? Have you never loved any one — your mother?

GELWEX. She left me in the gutter!

BARBARA. Your sweetheart! Surely you have loved someone?

GREENE. Yes, he *loved* a girl once.

BARBARA. [*To* GELWEX.] And she loved you?

GELWEX. No! She married me and left me for another man, taking our baby with her!

[MRS. HUNTER *enters with the whisky, a bottle and a glass, and with her husband's gun.*

BARBARA. No wonder you're hard if you've had such troubles! Well, here's a good drink to drown them in.

[*Goes to* MRS. HUNTER, *taking the whisky and glass from her, and motioning her to place the gun on the centre table, which* MRS. HUNTER *does.*

GELWEX. Good!

[*A fife-and-drum corps is heard in the distance, playing "We'll Rally Round the Flag, Boys, We'll Rally Round the Flag, Shouting the Battle Cry of Freedom!"*

GREENE. Here they are!

[*Places his gun. As* BARBARA *starts to pour the whisky out into the glass, a far-off shot and a distant shout are heard.*

GELWEX. [*In a hurry to drink.*] Damn the glass!

[*He seizes the bottle out of* BARBARA'S *hand to drink more quickly. She goes toward the table and puts down the glass.*

GREENE. [*As* GELWEX *is about to drink, cries out in great excitement.*] Fred! Fred! Look! look! Can't you see?

GELWEX. [*Looks, starts, throws down the bottle, which crashes, and gets his gun ready, shouting like a beast.*] Yes! Good! The Seventy-fourth! the Seventy-fourth!

[BARBARA *starts violently, and kneels beside the centre table. Two more distant shots, and the drum and fife sound louder. Shouts and cries are heard.*

GREENE. Yes, it's them, sure!

[*Watching more intently.*

[TRUMBULL'S *voice is heard outside, coming from up the road. He is urging his men on.*

TRUMBULL. Come on, boys! come on! For country and for love!

GELWEX. [*With strong, fierce emphasis, and*

tightening his grip on his musket.] Don't interfere with me!

[BARBARA *takes up the Minister's gun.*

MRS. HUNTER. [*Behind her.*] Pray, Barbara, pray!

BARBARA. *You* pray. If he puts his finger on the trigger, *I'll* shoot!

[GELWEX *lifts his gun and shows intense excitement as he takes aim.* BARBARA *covers him with her gun, and holds it steady. As* GELWEX *puts his finger on the trigger, she herself shoots. With a loud oath from* GELWEX, *his gun drops from his hold, and, seizing his right arm with his other hand, he turns from the window toward* BARBARA, *who still kneels at the table, and lifts her head defiantly to his look, as*

THE CURTAIN FALLS

THE THIRD ACT

Two Days Later

In the Frietchie house in Frederick. The living room of the house. This is an old Colonial hall, furnished in rosewood, with faded red brocade upholstery, and curtains of the same at the windows; outside green Venetian blinds. The walls are white, and heavy green-black marble columns support a balcony, which runs across the entire end. From the centre of the balcony comes down a broad, crimson-carpeted staircase, with white spindles and a mahogany rail. Behind the staircase, underneath the balcony, is the front door. Off one end of the balcony, a door leads to other rooms in the house; off the opposite

end, a door leads to BARBARA'S *room. There are big, comfortable armchairs about, and a table littered with magazines beside a window. Ferns and daisies are growing in the fireplace. Portraits by Copley and Stuart are on the wall. There is a general suggestion of disorder; a bonnet and a pair of woman's gloves lie carelessly on the mantel; a man's cloak has fallen on the floor beside an armchair. It is late in the afternoon.* BARBARA *sits in the middle of the staircase, listening, sorrowful and tense.*

MAMMY LU. [*Comes in from the back way, entering by the parlor door at the Left.*] Miss Barbara, is yo' hyah, honey?

BARBARA. [*Turning her head to see who it is.*] Oh, Mammy Lu! Is the fighting over?

MAMMY LU. Yaas, Missy, or you wouldn't have cotched dis ole niggah woman out! We

ain't heard no shots in our house fo' dis long time.

BARBARA. [*Despairingly.*] And *we've lost!*

MAMMY LU. Lor' save us, no, honey! Frederick's a Rebel town again, bress de Lord!

BARBARA. Yes, yes, I know. Why did you come over?

MAMMY LU. Why, I done been tole, Missy, as how all dese low-down, ornery niggars of Massa Frietchie's hez clahed out with the Yankees, and I jes' felt in my bones as I could do something in the house fo' you.

BARBARA. That's very kind of you, Mammy. How's Sue?

MAMMY LU. Oh, she's better; but she near cotched her death goin' with you to Hagerstown! She talk yet exactly like a bull-frog, she does. Missy asked if you'd seen your pa?

BARBARA. Yes, last night; but he refuses to speak to me.

MAMMY LU. Lord o' massy! won't speak to his own chile?

BARBARA. [*Rising.*] Not a word! He thinks I'm already married to Captain Trumbull. Now, I want you to go upstairs to the spare room [*sending* MAMMY LU *up the stairs*], and let out the man you'll find in the chimney-closet.

MAMMY LU. [*Frightened, stops on the stairs, half-way up.*] A man! For Lawd's sake, Missy!

BARBARA. Don't be afraid; he's a Rebel soldier, wounded.

MAMMY LU. [*Going up stairs and along the balcony to the Left.*] Po' man! Done been hurted by some ornery Yank?

BARBARA. No, he was wounded by a woman, Mammy.

MAMMY LU. [*Stops, surprised a moment, and then goes on.*] Bress my soul!

[*Goes from off the balcony through the door at the Left.*

BARBARA. [*Calls after her.*] Bring him down here! [*She turns as she hears some one enter.* FRIETCHIE *comes in from behind the stairs as she speaks. He is dusty and dirty; his clothes are torn.* BARBARA *runs toward him.*] Father! [FRIETCHIE *stops as she comes to him. She looks questioningly at him. He answers her gaze with his eyes, stern, without speaking.*] Father! speak to me! [FRIETCHIE *moves up the stage to get past her and go to the parlor door.* BARBARA *steps up the stage at the same time, to keep in front of him and block his way.*] No, no, father! The fighting! is it over? [*She waits, but* FRIETCHIE *does not answer.* BARBARA *puts her two hands on her father, plead-*

ingly.] Tell me something. Who is wounded — who is safe? Captain Trumbull? [FRIETCHIE, *as she speaks* "Trumbull," *deliberately and firmly, but without hurting her, takes her hands off him, and, placing her out of his way, crosses toward the parlor door.* BARBARA *calls after him, almost beside herself.*] For Heaven's sake, father, speak to me! Listen! I will tell you the truth! I am *not* married to Captain Trumbull!

FRIETCHIE. [*Turning by the door.*] *Is* that the truth, or only said to make me tell you something?

BARBARA. It is the truth. The fighting at Hagerstown kept the Minister away, and took Will from me before I could be his wife! [*Her father goes to her.*] Have you news of him?

FRIETCHIE. [*Beside her.*] No, nothing!

BARBARA. [*Looking him straight in the eyes.*]

You don't know if he's safe, or — wounded — or — [*She stops.*

FRIETCHIE. Better for you if he *were among the missing!*

BARBARA. [*Pushing him away from her, throws herself upon the bottom stairs.*] Oh, you are too cruel! I *love* him! I love him!

FRIETCHIE. You love your father too, don't you? Well, he's my enemy and your brother's; but he seems to have driven love for your *brother* out of your heart! I've not heard you ask about *his* life!

BARBARA. [*Eagerly.*] Oh, yes, Arthur; have you seen him?

FRIETCHIE. [*Proudly.*] No, but I've heard! He was in the thick of it, where the fighting was hottest! Ahead, always ahead! God bless him! My boy!

BARBARA. He's alive?

FRIETCHIE. Yes. Jack Negly saw him.

BARBARA. [*Rising.*] Thank God for *that*, for *that!*

FRIETCHIE. They gave Colonel Negly his commission yesterday, and Jack enlisted in his father's regiment. [BARBARA *stands with her arms linked around the newel post of the staircase.* FRIETCHIE *walks up and down the hall.*] They say the old war-horse fought well. I envy him! But even he doesn't take away the glory from our boy. Every one I've seen agrees Frederick owes most to Arthur Frietchie, that she is once more under the Southern flag. Come upstairs with me, and we'll put the blessed banner out again.

[*At the foot of the stairs he holds out his hand to her to take her upstairs with him.*

BARBARA. [*Hesitating and not giving her hand.*]

Father — if — if I told you I had wavered in my allegiance to that flag —

FRIETCHIE. [*Who has started a few steps up, turns.*] I wouldn't believe you! Come, come, Barbara! [*Leaning over the railing toward her, he grows more tender.*] You've been attracted by a handsome stranger — this Yankee officer. You think you love him, but you're only a girl. I'm an old man, and I know what such love is worth. Wait till you're older.

[*Smoothing her hair affectionately with his hands as she stands below him, leaning against the newel post.*

BARBARA. My mother married you *before she* was my age!

FRIETCHIE. Did she repent it?

BARBARA. No! Nor will I when I marry Captain Trumbull!

FRIETCHIE. [*Coming down again to the foot of the stairs.*] You'll *never* marry *him!* Your mother's case was different. She and I grew up together, side by side, and when I first laid you in your mother's arms and whispered, "Barbara, here's your *daughter!*", she smiled back at me through two big tears and said, "She's *yours;* make *her* as happy as you've made me!" And once again, the night before she died, she called you mine, and said, "Find her a husband, Southern, like her father; don't let her go away into the cold North! Keep her near you — to take — my place —" [*He breaks down for a second and turns away, but controls himself at once, and turns back to* BARBARA.] Barbara, your mother's youngest brother, your Uncle Dick, fell in the fight today, killed by a Northern bullet —

BARBARA. [*Taking a step toward him, interjects.*] Uncle Dick!

FRIETCHIE. And if they brought *here even the dead body of* Captain Trumbull, I'd refuse it resting place under my roof!

BARBARA. [*Going to him, hand raised to stop the words, and with a cry of horror.*] Father!

[*Enter* GELWEX *on the balcony, from the door Left. He is in civilian's clothes, his right arm in a sling, splintered and bandaged. He comes to the top of the stairs.*

FRIETCHIE. Who's this?

BARBARA. A Rebel soldier I've been hiding. His name is Gelwex.

[GELWEX *comes down the stairs.*

FRIETCHIE. [*To* GELWEX.] Were you fighting to-day?

GELWEX. No, sir. I come from Hagerstown with the young lady couple of days back.

FRIETCHIE. You're wounded?

BARBARA. [*Quickly and quietly.*] *I* did that!

FRIETCHIE. You?

BARBARA. In Hagerstown. [*To* GELWEX.] Tell him, if you wish.

[*She goes to the window under the balcony on the Left, and stands leaning against it, looking out.*

GELWEX. [*In a dogged manner.*] I was a sharpshooter in the Preacher's house. I hed a grudge against Captain Trumbull. He come along, and I aimed, but *she* shot first!

FRIETCHIE. [*Outraged, angry.*] My daughter shot a soldier of the South! Would to God you'd killed him first! It's he who made the fighting here, to-day, double the work. We almost had the town, when he came on with reinforcements, and fought like a very devil!

BARBARA. [*Who has come quickly forward through this speech, eager to hear of* CAPT. TRUM-

BULL.] You told me you knew nothing! Tell me more!

FRIETCHIE. That's all I know. The Yankees turned your brain! *You*, my daughter, shot a defender of the South!

BARBARA. What a defender! A *deserter* from the North, paid by our troops to betray his own! I love the South, but I think this time she's wrong.

FRIETCHIE. Wrong? Hush! you're crazy!

BARBARA. No! A mother loves her child even when he's naughty, and so I love the South; but the only flag I'll wave is the flag of the Union, the flag my lover fights for!

FRIETCHIE. Silence! [*To* GELWEX.] You know this Captain Trumbull?

[BARBARA *goes and sits on the long bench beside the chimney, watching the two men.*

GELWEX. Yes, sir.

FRIETCHIE. Where's your company now?

GELWEX. Here in Frederick. It's your son's, sir.

FRIETCHIE. You're ready to rejoin?

GELWEX. Yes, sir; any minute!

FRIETCHIE. Wait. Come with me; I want a word with you. [*Motions* GELWEX *up the stairs ahead of him;* GELWEX *starts.* SUE ROYCE *comes in from the parlor. She looks like a scarlet peony upside down, in a very fashionable dress of high-colored, rustling flounces, and hugs a small, three-cornered white worsted shawl tight around her bare shoulders. She shows evident signs of a heavy cold in her head, the tip of her pretty little nose being almost as red as her dress. She sniffles constantly, almost without cessation, and pronounces all her "m's" like "b's," her "n's" like "d's"*

and her "c's" like "g's," etc. Whenever she isn't speaking, she holds a small, damp wad of a handkerchief pathetically, yet gracefully, to her nose. BARBARA *motions her quickly not to speak, with a finger on her lips and a gesture to* FRIETCHIE *and* GELWEX, *who are about to go upstairs, not wishing* FRIETCHIE *to know* SUE *has come in. But* FRIETCHIE *hears the door slam behind* SUE, *and turns.*] Ah! Good afternoon, Sue.

SUE. [*Attempting dignity and politeness, but rather frightened.*] Good ebening, Bister —

[*She sneezes.*

FRIETCHIE. Have you seen Arthur?

SUE. Do, sir. I thought berhabs he was here.

[*She sniffles.*

FRIETCHIE. Not yet. But Barbara will tell you about him. [*He has come close to* SUE *and now adds in an undertone to her.*] *Shame* her, if

you can, girl, out of her infatuation for this Northerner. Go on, Gelwex.

[FRIETCHIE *and* GELWEX *go upstairs along the balcony, and enter the room at the Left.*

SUE. [*Going to* BARBARA. *They sit together on the bench, where they speak quietly, almost in undertones.*] Doesn'd he gnow I wend do Hagersdown with you?

BARBARA. No.

SUE. Dell me aboud Arthur!

BARBARA. I only know he was very, very brave. He led his troops where the battle was fiercest.

SUE. Oh, I wish he wouldn'd do thad sord of thi'g. [*She sniffles.*

BARBARA. I *know* the same is true, too, of Captain Trumbull, but I can't hear a word of him! And, now the town's in the hands of the Rebels,

how will he send me word? Unless, perhaps, he's taken prisoner.

SUE. And thad soldier with your father; is he sdill adgry with Gabdin Drumbull?

BARBARA. I don't know. I've not spoken to him. No one dared go near his hiding place, except to slip him food, and then without a word.

SUE. He bust be very gradeful to you!

BARBARA. [*Half amused.*] Why? For shooting him?

SUE. Do, for brig'gi'g hib here.

BARBARA. Oh, that was the least I could do afterward. Besides, I thought it would keep him away from Captain Trumbull.

[*Enter* MAMMY LU. *She comes again through the parlor door, this time with a steaming plate of hot biscuits. She goes to* BARBARA.

MAMMY LU. Thought you might be hungry, honey.

BARBARA. [*Shaking her head.*] No, thank you, Mammy.

MAMMY LU. But your pa says you ain't eat nothing to-day!

SUE. Deither hab I, and I'b starbi'g, Babby.

[*Taking the biscuits and eating ravenously.*

BARBARA. [*Rising.*] Dear Mammy Lu, go out in the street and see if you can hear something of Captain Trumbull!

[*Moving her toward the street door.*

MAMMY LU. Will you eat something, honey, if I do?

BARBARA. Yes, yes!

MAMMY LU. Dat's a promise! Dat's a promise, chile!

[*And she goes out.*

SUE. Oh, don'd you hade war? [*She sniffles.*

BARBARA. [*Moving about restlessly.*] We brought this on ourselves!

SUE. Whad!

BARBARA. It's true!

SUE. I'll nod stay here if you go od! I wo'der a boldt doesn'd cub dowd and strige you lige Sapphira!

BARBARA. Don't be foolish; it's a *battle's* thunder in our air. [*A sigh.*] Dear God, for news of him!

[*It is sunset, and from now on the dusk begins to steal into the house.* MAMMY LU *comes hurriedly in.*

MAMMY LU. Miss Sue! Miss Sue! Come, Missy! Come with your ole Mammy!

BARBARA. What's the matter, Mammy? Captain Trumbull?

MAMMY LU. He's coming, Missy! He's hyah!

SUE. Bud Babby?

MAMMY LU. [*Taking her arm.*] Don't ask me no questions, chile; but jes' come on with your ole Mammy!

[*Goes through the parlor door with* SUE.

[BARBARA *starts to follow, calling* "Mammy," *but stops as* ARTHUR FRIETCHIE *and a Southern soldier — haggard, blood-and-powder stained — enter, supporting in their arms the body of* CAPT. TRUMBULL. *He is wounded in the breast, and, wrapped tightly around to staunch the wound, in a narrow, twisted strip, is* BARBARA'S *flag.*

ARTHUR. Barbara!

[*He leans against the newel post to support himself and his burden.*

BARBARA. Will!

[*Going quickly to them. The other soldier goes out by the front door.*

TRUMBULL. [*Leaving* ARTHUR'S *arm to take a half step toward* BARBARA; *he is half dazed.*] Good-by, girl —

[*He staggers, half falls.* ARTHUR *and* BARBARA *catch him. He lies half on the floor, resting in* BARBARA'S *arms, who kneels beside him, holding his head on her bosom.*

BARBARA. Will! My *husband!* Hurt! hurt!

TRUMBULL. [*Half raising himself with the force of a man in fever, and thinking he is again in battle.*] Come on, boys! come on! Push ahead! Take the town and stop the bloodshed, before we make the place full of widows and fatherless! That's the only way, even though we must leave some sweethearts and mothers with aching hearts at home. On! on! Beat the drum, boy! Beat

with all your might! Follow the flag! For country and for love! Ah! — I'm hit! But don't mind me. No! no! Go on! I've something here'll staunch the wound and keep my heart beating till I see her! [*He pauses a moment, and then adds in an undertone:*] Good God, Arthur Frietchie! You fired that shot! Don't let her know her brother — Don't let her know —

[*He falls at* BARBARA'S *feet.*

BARBARA. [*Rising with a wild cry.*] Arthur! *you?*

ARTHUR. Yes, I —

BARBARA. [*Beside herself.*] No! no!

ARTHUR. Forgive me — I didn't know him — I —

BARBARA. [*Lifting her arm in menace.*] If he dies! — *you!* —

TRUMBULL. [*Half lifting himself again.*] Good-by, girl!

[BARBARA *and* ARTHUR *hold him upright in their arms.*

FRIETCHIE. [*Upstairs, in the room Left, calls.*] Barbara!

BARBARA. [*Aghast, and with a movement to cover* TRUMBULL *from view.*] *Father!*

FRIETCHIE. [*Calls again from the room.*] What's going on? Is Arthur back?

BARBARA. No! [ARTHUR *starts to speak in contradiction, but* BARBARA *stops him with her hand on his arm. She calls to* FRIETCHIE.] I'm coming upstairs, father; I'll tell you in a minute!

ARTHUR. [*Whispers.*] Why?

BARBARA. [*Whispers.*] Father swore to me just now he wouldn't let even the *dead body* of Captain Trumbull lie in this house. Quick! Call

Mammy Lu, softly. [*Pointing to the parlor door.*] Then go for a doctor.

[*He goes to the door and calls, not in a loud voice.*

ARTHUR. Mammy Lu!

MAMMY LU. [*From inside.*] Yaas, sir.

ARTHUR. [*Coming back to* BARBARA.] I'll ask Hal Boyd to come.

BARBARA. But he knows Will!

ARTHUR. That's all right. We can trust him, and he's done splendid work to-day. Hide Trumbull. We're sending a provost's guard about the town to get all wounded Union men, and make them prisoners. [*Going toward the front door, he turns.*] Hide him well! They haven't time to argue about how badly wounded a man is. If they find Trumbull, they'll take him.

[*He goes out into the street.*

[BARBARA, *leaning against the newel post with*

TRUMBULL, *her arms about him, holds her face close to his, her cheek against his cheek.*

BARBARA. Oh, *live! live!* [MAMMY LU *re-enters. She starts in sympathetic surprise.* BARBARA *speaks quickly.*] Not a word, Mammy! Help me! Quick! Get Captain Trumbull up to my room!

MAMMY LU. *Your* room?

BARBARA. Oh, yes! And Mr. Frietchie mustn't know. *No one* must know!

MAMMY LU. Yaas, Missy.

[TRUMBULL *helps himself, with one hand on the railing.* BARBARA *and* MAMMY LU *help him at the other side. They start up the stairs.*

BARBARA. Careful! careful!

[*The sun has set, and it has grown quite dark in the house.* FRIETCHIE *comes out on the balcony.*

FRIETCHIE. What is it, Barbara?

BARBARA. [*Stepping in front of* TRUMBULL *to hide him.*] Don't come down, father — it's a wounded soldier.

FRIETCHIE. A Union man or Rebel?

BARBARA. [*After a second's hesitation.*] A Union man!

FRIETCHIE. [*Angry.*] Was there no other house for him to go to?

BARBARA. [*Reproachfully.*] Hush, father! He's *badly* hurt!

FRIETCHIE. [*Starting to come down to them.*] Let me help you.

BARBARA. [*Quickly.*] No! Save time by getting us some lint from the sewing-room. Mammy and I can manage all right.

FRIETCHIE. Lint and some bandages, and I'll send you Gelwex.

BARBARA. [*Quickly.*] No! no!

FRIETCHIE. [*Turning.*] Why not?

BARBARA. Yes! I mean yes! [FRIETCHIE *goes into the room, Left.* BARBARA *and* MAMMY LU *help and urge* TRUMBULL *on faster up the stairs.*] Quick! Hurry! hurry!

[GELWEX *enters on the balcony, and, crossing, meets them just at the head of the stairs.*

GELWEX. Let me help you, lady!

BARBARA. [*Trying to hide* TRUMBULL.] *No!* I *don't want* your help!

GELWEX. The Captain!

BARBARA. Hush! Open that door for us, and go in.

[*Motioning to the room off the balcony, Right,* — BARBARA'S *room.* GELWEX *opens the door. He goes into the room, they following him;* MAMMY LU *closes the door behind them.* SUE

comes from the parlor with a lighted lamp, which lights up the hall. At the same time, FRIETCHIE *re-enters on the balcony and goes to* BARBARA'S *room.* MAMMY LU *comes out and meets him, holding the door shut behind her.*

MAMMY LU. Yaas, sah, I'll take 'em, Massa Frietchie. De Rebel soldier, he's inside with Miss Barbara, and says they don't ought ter be no mo' in de room.

SUE. [*Who has placed the lamp on the table in the window, speaks up to* MAMMY LU.] Babby, where's Bister Arthur?

MAMMY LU. He done gone for a doctor, Missy.

FRIETCHIE. [*Coming down the stairs, speaks proudly.*] What do you think of *my boy?*

SUE. I thi'g so buch ob your boy thad I'b goi'g to tage hib away frob you! [*She sniffles.*

FRIETCHIE. Nothing of the sort! [*Kissing her.*] You'll have to take *me* with him!

[ARTHUR *comes back with* HAL BOYD.

FRIETCHIE. My son!

[*Going toward him.*

SUE. [*At the same time.*] Arthur!

ARTHUR. Sue!

[*Passing his father, he goes to her and embraces her. With* SUE *still in his arms, he stretches out his right arm and hand to his father, who takes it and wrings it warmly.*

FRIETCHIE. Oh, my boy! If only your mother could be here to-day!

ARTHUR. Excuse me, father. [SUE *and* FRIETCHIE *then notice* HAL *at the same time, and greet him. To* HAL, *motioning up to* BARBARA'S *room.*] In that room, Hal.

[HAL *bows, hurries up the stairs to the room,*

and raps gently on the door. It is opened by MAMMY LU. HAL *goes in.*

ARTHUR. [*To his father.*] The wounded man upstairs — he hasn't died?

FRIETCHIE. I think not; I haven't seen him. Your man, Gelwex, and Barbara are with him.

ARTHUR. Pray God he lives!

FRIETCHIE. You know him?

ARTHUR. *I shot him!*

SUE. [*In horror, cries out.*] Arthur! *you* shot Captain —

[*She stops herself before she says the name, startled by a warning look from* ARTHUR.

FRIETCHIE. Captain? Captain who? Who is the man upstairs? [ARTHUR *and* SUE *are at a loss for an answer, and remain silent.* FRIETCHIE *watches them, waiting for his answer. He goes to* ARTHUR.] Who is the man?

[BARBARA'S *door upstairs opens, and* GELWEX *comes out.* ARTHUR, FRIETCHIE, *and* SUE *look up to see who it is.*

FRIETCHIE. [*With determination, looking up at* GELWEX.] Gelwex!

GELWEX. [*Coming to the stairs and starting down them.*] Yes, sir.

FRIETCHIE. Who is the wounded man in my daughter's room? [*The question stops* GELWEX *half way down the stairs; he looks at* FRIETCHIE, *startled by the question.* BARBARA *steals out from her room, closing the door softly behind her, and listens on the balcony.* ARTHUR *and* SUE *listen, intent and frightened.* GELWEX *makes no answer.*] It's Captain Trumbull!

GELWEX. You're right, sir.

BARBARA. [*To Gelwex.*] You told him! I knew I couldn't trust you!

GELWEX. No, lady! Didn't you hear? The old gent guessed it!

FRIETCHIE. [*Sternly to* ARTHUR, *and with meaning.*] Arthur, take Sue away from here!

ARTHUR. But, father — ?

FRIETCHIE. [*Very slowly.*] *Take — Sue — away!*

[ARTHUR *looks up at* BARBARA *to see what she wishes; she motions "yes" with her head, standing on the balcony, fearless, determined, and calm.* ARTHUR *goes with* SUE *out through the parlor.*

FRIETCHIE. Gelwex!

GELWEX. Yes, sir?

[*Comes down the stairs. At the same time* BARBARA *moves with calm determination along the balcony to the top of the stairs where, standing, she blocks the passage.*

FRIETCHIE. Gelwex, go upstairs and get that damned Yankee out of *my daughter's* room, by God!

GELWEX. Yes, sir.

FRIETCHIE. And out of *my house.* Out into the street with him!

BARBARA. No, no, father! [*Flying down the stairs toward him.*] It would kill him!

FRIETCHIE. Let it! That's not my lookout! [*To* GELWEX.] Go!

[GELWEX *starts toward the stairs.*

BARBARA. No! [GELWEX *stops at the foot of the stairs and, turning, looks at* FRIETCHIE *for another command.*] You can't carry your hatred of the North so far as that! This man is wounded, perhaps to death —

FRIETCHIE. I won't shelter him!

BARBARA. Isn't it enough that your own son

gave him his wound! Need you triumph over that?

FRIETCHIE. He came here to war against my son. He's taken you from me, and made you a traitor to your country!

BARBARA. Never a traitor!

FRIETCHIE. Wasn't it enough that the North should come and lay waste our land, that this man should push his way into my very house and lay *its* happiness in ruins? Do as I told you, Gelwex!

[GELWEX *starts again to go up the stairs.*

BARBARA. [*Stopping him.*] No! Wait! [*She turns to her father, and stands behind his back.*] I can't argue with you, father. I can only beg and pray. [*She sinks slowly and softly to her knees, clasping his hands and arms.*] Let him stay! Let him stay!

FRIETCHIE. No!

[GELWEX *turns his back discreetly, and watches the street through the window.*

BARBARA. [*Softly.*] I love him! If he goes, *I* go with him. If he dies, *I* die! It will kill him! Let him stay!

[*Stealing her hand about his, where it hangs clenched tight at his side.*

FRIETCHIE. No!

[*Drawing his hand away.*

BARBARA. [*Rising.*] *Yes! yes!* Don't you remember what you said to me a little while ago? *I* can still see the picture, if *you* can't. The big old rosewood bed we all of us knew as mother's, — I can see her sweet face pale on the great pillow — I see you bending over her with a tiny bundle in your arms — I see you place *me* — oh, so gently! — in those dear, thin hands — I hear

you whisper, "Barbara, here's your daughter!" and I see her smile up at you through her tears and say, "Make *her* as *happy* as you've made *me!*" Father, my *only* happiness, all the joy there can ever be for me in this world, depends on the life of that man upstairs! Send him out to die in our streets! — [*A pause.*] You *break* my heart — and — and *damn* my soul, — for, if merciful death shouldn't come to me, I swear to you before Heaven, I'd go myself *to meet death!* [*Through this speech,* FRIETCHIE *has been gradually moved;* BARBARA *sees this, and increases her pleading, piteous tones. She finishes with the threat in almost a whisper; not an angry tone, but an exalted one. Still* FRIETCHIE *does not altogether relent, and standing behind him she cannot see the tears in his eyes. Her own eyes filling, and her voice breaking pitifully, she leans her head and*

hands upon his shoulder, and begs again.] Please — let him stay! — please!

FRIETCHIE. [*Turns and looks into* BARBARA'S *face, his own shamed, and trembling with emotion.*] He *stays!*

[*He takes her in his arms and kisses her.*

BARBARA. [*To* GELWEX.] You heard? *He stays!*

GELWEX. Yes, lady!

BARBARA. [*Embracing her father.*] Oh! You are *twice* my father to-day! And now one more thing. Arthur says a provost's guard will come to our house and, if they find Captain Trumbull, will take him. Could you see General Jackson? Could you keep our house shut to them? Surely the Rebels can trust you!

FRIETCHIE. I can see General Jackson, but I won't lie to him, daughter!

BARBARA. You needn't! Only ask him to trust us with our wounded, whether they be Rebels or Union men.

FRIETCHIE. I'll see what I can do.

BARBARA. Take Gelwex with you, but don't tell him your errand.

FRIETCHIE. Gelwex, come! We'll look for news!

BARBARA. You'll make haste, father?

[GELWEX *goes out behind the staircase.*

FRIETCHIE. Yes. And, Barbara, you won't forget while I'm gone, the master of the house is a *Rebel!*

BARBARA. No, father.

[FRIETCHIE *goes out.* HAL BOYD *comes from* BARBARA'S *room and, crossing the balcony, comes down the stairs.* BARBARA *goes eagerly to meet him.*

BARBARA. Yes, yes?

HAL. He is quieter!

BARBARA. Well?

HAL. Mammy Lu's a good nurse.

BARBARA. But he will *live?*

HAL. [*Very slowly.*] He has one chance in a —

[*He hesitates.*

BARBARA. Hundred?

HAL. In a *thousand!*

[*A moment's pause.*

BARBARA. [*Sinking on the stairs.*] You've left medicine — everything?

HAL. There is only one medicine that will save him, Barbara, and that is *Nature's! Sleep! If he sleeps,* the fever may abate — *may* — one chance in —

BARBARA. A thousand?

HAL. Yes.

BARBARA. But a chance!

HAL. On the other hand, the fever setting in, with that wound, the man will die before morning.

BARBARA. [*To herself.*] Sleep!

HAL. Or *absolute quiet!* Don't let any one disturb him. Don't even go yourself till morning. No one must go into his room to-night.

BARBARA. I'll watch here.

HAL. I wish I could watch with you.

BARBARA. You can't?

HAL. No — I'm needed — there are many wounded, and yet it's so imperative, Barbara, he shouldn't be disturbed.

[*Gives his hand to her.*

BARBARA. [*Takes his hand.*] There is *hope!*

HAL. There is always hope, thank God!

[*Pressing her hand firmly, and then going.*

BARBARA. [*Alone.*] Absolute quiet — that's

what I can do! I'll stay here and watch till morning, and then take Mammy's place.

[*The front door bursts open, and* JACK NEGLY *enters. He bears the marks of battle upon him. His appearance is wild and disordered. His disappointed love for* BARBARA, *and his terrible experience of the horrors of war that day, have overturned the boy's brain. He enters like a small whirlwind, throwing his hat high in the air, and showering* BARBARA *with a mass of field flowers he has gathered roughly and stuck in his belt.*

JACK. [*Shouting as he comes in.*] Hello, Bab! We've won! We've won!

BARBARA. [*Going quickly to him.*] Hush! Lower your voice!

JACK. Why?

BARBARA. We've a sick soldier in the house!

JACK. He'll be glad to hear me shouting! He'll know we've won! [*Louder.*] Three cheers for Maryland and Stonewall Jackson! Hooray!

[*He is interrupted by* BARBARA.

BARBARA. [*Seizing his arm.*] Hush, I tell you!

JACK. [*Sings and dances around her in a circle.*] Ho! Hey! My tragedy queen, Barbara, has her fine airs on!

[*Repeating* ad lib.

BARBARA. For Heaven's sake, keep still and quiet!

JACK. [*Creeping up to her, softly, crazily.*] I'll be quiet if you'll marry me! Eh?

BARBARA. Aren't you tired of asking me that question?

JACK. No! I'll never tire! [*Sings again, and dances.*] Will you marry me, marry me, marry

me, will you marry me, Babby? Come! Let's go upstairs and see your sick soldier! I'll tell him how we won the fight and I won you!

[*With a movement toward the staircase.*

BARBARA. [*Getting to staircase before him, and blocking his passage.*] No!

JACK. Then marry me, marry me now! How I fought! I wish you had seen me! I killed three Yankees, one after the other, and all for you! Do you understand? Because I love you, and I want to make you love me! Where's your Northern lover? I heard he was there, with his company, pegging away at us! And I tried to find him, but — [*He breaks off suddenly, and an inspiration flashes over his face. Laughing.*] I know where he is! Ha, ha! That's good! *He's* the sick soldier upstairs, and no more sick than I am, — but I'll make him sick!

[*Pulls out a pistol.* BARBARA *stands at the foot of the stairs, blocking the way.*

BARBARA. [*With low intensity.*] *Lower your voice!*

JACK. [*Changing.*] They say I'm mad! Well, so I am! From loving you! And you made me love you, didn't you?

BARBARA. I flirted with you, yes, and Heaven knows, I'm sorry for it!

JACK. Yes; you flirted with me. You knew I was in love with you, and you led me on. [*He pauses a moment, but she does not answer.*] It was fine, wasn't it? As many strings to your bow as you could get! The more the merrier, for *you!* But it was misery and hell *for me!* I thought you cared for me. [*He half throws himself upon the bench beside the chimney.*] And so you would have [*he jumps up*]; and so you will,

my Bab, before I'm through! I went into this War to kill that man, and I'll do it yet.

[*He takes a step toward* BARBARA; *she stands upright, firm, undaunted, in front of the staircase. A moment's pause.*

BARBARA. You certainly are mad to think Captain Trumbull is upstairs.

JACK. *Isn't he?*

[COL. NEGLY *enters through the front door with a provost guard of six Confederate soldiers.*

COL. NEGLY. Miss Barbara, we are going through the houses for Yankee prisoners. If your father is home, his word'll do that you've none concealed here.

BARBARA. Won't *my* word do as well?

COL. NEGLY. No! *yours* won't! We all know you threw my boy over for a confounded Yankee.

[JACK *stands beside the fireplace.*] God forgive you, *I* can't!

BARBARA. My love for my country has not altered.

COL. NEGLY. Has your love for this Captain Trumbull?

BARBARA. No!

COL. NEGLY. I thought not, and his friends are your friends! We must search.

JACK. And he's there, hidden in Barbara's room — I know it! Captain Trumbull!

COL. NEGLY. What? The dog who came between you two?

BARBARA. *No!* It's a mad idea he has, that Captain Trumbull's here.

[GELWEX *comes into the hall from the street.* BARBARA *looks at him, frightened.*

JACK. Ask *him!* he knows! Isn't Captain Trumbull upstairs?

GELWEX. [*Turns and looks at* BARBARA *a moment. She looks pleadingly into his eyes.*] *No!*

COL. NEGLY. I'll not take his word for it; we'll finish our search. [*To his men.*] Come!

BARBARA. [*At the foot of the staircase.*] No — listen — we have both lied. The wounded man *is* Captain Trumbull.

JACK. I knew it!

COL. NEGLY. *Now I wipe out my score with him!*

BARBARA. But you mustn't take him away — to move him will be *death!*

COL. NEGLY. His life for my boy's brain!

BARBARA. What do you mean?

COL. NEGLY. [*To his men.*] Up the stairs!

[*His foot on the lower step — the soldiers move to follow.*

BARBARA. No. Colonel Negly, you shall not pass!

COL. NEGLY. Out of my way, girl!

BARBARA. No! you'll have to drag me down these stairs! Use force! let your men charge bayonets! for, of my own full will, I will *not* move!

GELWEX. Hold on, here's Mr. Frietchie!

[*As* FRIETCHIE *enters with a paper. He sees* COL. NEGLY.

BARBARA. [*Leaning over the stair rail eagerly.*] Father!

FRIETCHIE. Negly, old friend?

BARBARA. Have you got it?

FRIETCHIE. Yes.

[*Giving her the paper. She hurriedly glances over it.*

COL. NEGLY. Frietchie, old friend, I'm under orders to search your house.

BARBARA. [*Giving the paper to* COL. NEGLY.] This spares you, sir, that disagreeable duty!

[COL. NEGLY *reads it, with a smothered exclamation; gives an order to his men, and goes out, followed by the guard.* JACK *also seems to follow, but stays hidden behind the stairs.*

BARBARA. [*To her father.*] Follow them and guard the front door for me! This house is my fort now, and I mean to hold it! [FRIETCHIE *goes out under the staircase.* BARBARA *turns to* GELWEX.] And you — why did you help me?

[*Giving him her hand.*

GELWEX. [*Embarrassed.*] I don't know.

BARBARA. Yes, tell me.

GELWEX. It was the least I could do.

BARBARA. Why?

GELWEX. [*With a half smile.*] Don't know another woman good enough shot to *only* "wing" me! — [*Indicating his wounded arm.*

BARBARA. [*Smiling gratefully at him, leads*

him toward the parlor door.] Watch this side of the house for me. Let no one in!

GELWEX. All right, lady.

[*Looks at her with respectful affection, and goes out.* BARBARA *goes to the lamp. Behind her back, meanwhile,* JACK *has cunningly and softly stolen along the other side of the staircase, and, when* BARBARA *puts out the lamp, he is at the foot of the stairs, on his hands and knees, ready to crawl up.* BARBARA, *coming slowly forward in the dark, gives a sudden cry as she sees* JACK'S *creeping figure, in the moonlight, half way up the stairs.* JACK *hurries as he hears her voice.*

BARBARA. [*In a tone of command.*] Jack! [*He starts, stops, turns and stands facing her. With her hand on the newel post at the foot of the staircase, she looks him straight in the face, trying to*

impel him by her will-power to obey her; after a second's pause, she speaks.] Come down those stairs! [*He half laughs, half sneers, and turns to go up farther, but a little hesitatingly. She speaks again.*] Jack Negly! [*He turns slowly and faces her, with a half laugh, half sneer; she fixes him with her eyes; his own try to shift, but finally are fixed in return upon hers. After a second, and still holding him with her eyes, she repeats in a low but firm, strong voice:*] Come back!

[*After a few seconds' pause, with his eyes still fixed upon hers, he comes slowly down the stairs; at the foot he sinks down, bursting into sobs.*

JACK. Oh, Barbara! Barbara! you have broken my heart!

[BARBARA *leans over him, and touches his shoulder pityingly.*

BARBARA. Forgive me. Forgive me — by not breaking mine!

[*She gradually influences and leads him away from the stairs, and guides him from the hall into the room where* GELWEX *is. She shuts the door, and leans against it alone a moment to gather strength.*

BARBARA. One chance in a thousand! [*She goes slowly to the stairs, and up them, dragging herself along by the rail; once she nearly falls. At the top, she rests a moment.*] I'll fight for that chance!

[*She steals softly to the closed door, behind which* TRUMBULL *lies. Reaching the door, she kneels beside it, and, pressing her ear close, she listens intently; as* —

THE CURTAIN FALLS

THE FOURTH ACT

The Next Morning

The First Scene. — Barbara's *room. A large, square bedroom, whose walls are covered with a big pink-flowered paper, chintz of a like color and pattern draping the window, dressing-table and old four-posted bed. A set of rosewood furniture is covered with "slips" of this same chintz also. It is the cool-looking room of a lovable girl. It is not littered and cluttered with knick-knacks and memorial rubbish, but there are a few photographs of interesting, if not all beautiful, people about, and the dressing-table is strewn with the pretty, useful and ornamental paraphernalia of a woman's toilet. On the Left is a door which leads out onto the upstairs balcony of the hall,*

and a window at the back. The bed stands out from the wall on the right side of the room, and by it stands now a small table. On this are some linen cloths, a glass of water, a cup and saucer, and a smallish hand lamp, lit. Beside this table, in a high-backed armchair, sits MAMMY LU, *very lightly dozing. The window curtains are closed and drawn, and there is a faint, cold, gray light in the room. In the bed lies* CAPT. TRUMBULL. *The door opens very slowly and softly, and* BARBARA *steals in. She is pale and anxious, her dress somewhat disordered, and her hair unbound and disarranged. She closes the door gently behind her, and pauses a second, as* MAMMY LU *opens her eyes and rouses herself. She sees* BARBARA, *and nods her head slowly but encouragingly, and rising, comes slowly and softly to her.*

MAMMY LU. [*Whispers when she and* BARBARA *are side by side. The two women speak only in half whispers.*] He done gone to sleep mos' quiet-like some time ago, and he haven't moved sence.

BARBARA. [*Softly.*] I'll take your place. Father's gone down to the hotel. He stayed up all night with me. We kept watch in the hall. And he wouldn't go to bed now; he said he wanted to be outdoors and get the air.

MAMMY LU. Better open the curtains and let in some fresh air here, too. Dis room is jes' powerful close.

BARBARA. Is it safe to do that?

MAMMY LU. Law! it's the bes' thing, honey. I'll put out dis here lamp; don't need that no mo'.

[MAMMY LU *goes to the little table for the lamp; very softly she arranges the things on the table, blows out the lamp, and comes to meet* BARBARA.

BARBARA *has meanwhile gone to the window and silently pulled back the curtains. A pallid dawn shines in — the sun is about to rise.* BARBARA *comes back and meets* MAMMY LU *in the centre of the room. She looks sadly at* MAMMY LU. *who looks back sympathetically, lovingly, at* BARBARA, *and, during this exchange of glances and sympathy, there is a perfect silence.*

BARBARA. [*Lifting her head.*] How still it is! [*Both women stand with their sides toward the bed. They make a movement of the head and eyes to show that they are listening for some sound from* TRUMBULL. *A moment's pause, then* BARBARA *whispers more softly.*] Oughtn't we hear him breathe? [MAMMY LU *nods her head.* BARBARA *seizes her arm.*] But do you — do you hear anything?

MAMMY LU. [*Frightened.*] No, Missy!

BARBARA. Go — and see —

[MAMMY LU *goes to the bed and leans over; a pause.* BARBARA *waits in an agony of suspense; slowly the old woman stands up straight and turns toward her.* BARBARA *reads the truth in her face, and with a cry of* "Mammy!" *starts toward the bed.* MAMMY LU *tries to stop her, taking hold of her kindly.*

MAMMY LU. Honey! he's sleepin' his last sleep!

[BARBARA *gives a half cry, a half moan, and, going to the bedside, throws herself on the floor, her head and arms on the bed. She cries out pitifully.*

BARBARA. Will! My sweetheart! my lover! my husband! Don't leave me! Don't leave me!

[*At this moment, from far off, many men's voices are heard singing "Dixie." After a few seconds,* BARBARA *hears the distant singing. Turning so*

she can see MAMMY LU, *she questions, breathless, horror-struck, sitting upright in a forlorn little heap on the floor. She speaks in a toneless voice.*] What is that?

MAMMY LU. [*Who has gone to the window at the sound of the singing, and looked out.*] It's the Southern sogers, chile, marching through the town.

BARBARA. Why?

MAMMY LU. 'Cause they'se done ben victorious!

BARBARA. Vict —! [BARBARA *rises sharply, as if struck, to her feet.*] No! no! It can't be true! It can't be true!

[*The soldiers' voices swell a little louder. She bends over the bed and slowly drags away from* TRUMBULL'S *body the blood-stained, ragged flag she had given him; clasping it to her bosom, breathing with difficulty, and suppress-*

ing her sobs, she goes across and out of the room. MAMMY LU *follows her, alarmed, and not understanding, she murmurs to her the old pet names of childhood, trying to soothe and comfort her. As they pass out of the door, the stage is darkened.*

THE SECOND SCENE. — *The strains of "Dixie" are heard, mingled with the shouts and cries of excited people and children. The street is seen, the same as in the* FIRST ACT, *but full of movement, commotion, and sound. It is early of a sunny morning. From all the houses, except the Frietchie house, hang Rebel flags and banners. The windows of all the houses are full of men, women and children, even babies in arms (of large, affectionate, colored nurses), in points of vantage.* SALLY NEGLY *is in an upper Negly window, and* LAURA *in a*

Royce window. The steps of the houses are full, too, and the red-brick pavement is crowded almost to the curb. A row of boys and girls are sitting on the Royce fence, and two urchins are up in a tree. The soldiers' voices are heard in the distance, singing "Dixie," and the crowd, shouting "Here they come! Here they come!" *go almost mad in the uproar and confusion. They surge forward over the street, from where the procession is expected.*

A MAN. [*On the Negly steps.*] Three cheers for Stonewall Jackson!

THE CROWD. [*In the street.*] Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!

BOY. [*On the Royce fence.*] Three cheers for Colonel Negly and Arthur Frietchie!

ALL. Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!

[*During these cheers,* BARBARA *opens the shutters*

leading onto the Frietchie balcony, and comes out. She carries her lover's blood-stained flag in her hand, and leans against the side of the window a moment to gather her strength. The singing of the soldiers off the stage swells louder, as they come nearer.

A MAN. [*On the Negly steps.*] They're a-coming now!

A MAN. [*On the Frietchie steps.*] Give it to 'em good!

[*Three great cheers. All begin singing "Dixie" with the distant soldiers.* BARBARA *has come forward on the balcony and, reaching up, is fastening the Union flag to the staff there.*

SALLY NEGLY. [*In her window.*] Look! Look at Barbara Frietchie! Sss! Shame! Shame!

[*All look up who can, and all who can't see, crane their necks and lean over.*

A YOUNG WOMAN. [*In a window.*] Damn the Yankee wife!

A MAN. [*On the Negly steps.*] Take that flag down!

ALL. Take it down! [*Ad lib.*

[*The crowd surge about the Frietchie house. They shout, and boo, and hiss at* BARBARA, *calling* "Shame!" *and* "Tear it down!" "Damn the Yankee girl," *etc., etc. The men and boys pick up stones and loose bricks, and begin throwing them at* BARBARA *and the flag.*

[*The soldiers' voices off stage swell louder. A small crowd in advance of the procession come rushing on, shouting* JACKSON'S *name.*

A MAN. [*On the Negly steps, shouts excitedly.*] Here they are! Jackson!

[*The crowd, with a wild shout of joy, turn and surge from the Frietchie house toward the*

advancing soldiers, echoing the cry of "Jackson!" *They are forced back onto the steps and against the houses in crowded rows, to leave room for the procession. They sing and shout, waving handkerchiefs and flags, sticks and hats, bursting into a climax of glad frenzy as* GEN. STONEWALL JACKSON *appears. A shower of bouquets fall before and around him from the women in the crowd and in the windows of the houses. His Aides and Staff accompany* JACKSON, *and are followed by a Drum-and-Fife Corps. In the line, two ragged, blood-stained, powder-scorched flags of the Confederacy are carried. The soldiers are many of them wounded, wearing any kind of uniform they can scrape together,—haggard, worn, but a brave crowd of men, rejoicing in a victory for a cause that is*

blessed to them. The soldiers sing "Dixie" as they march, the crowd in the street singing with them. As JACKSON *approaches the Frietchie stoop, the crowd remember* BARBARA *and her flag. Some one in the crowd throws a stone, which is the signal for a fresh outburst.*

A MAN. [*On the Negly steps.*] Shoot if she doesn't drop it! Shoot!

[*This cry is taken up by the crowd, and, with groans and hisses and shouts of* "Shoot" *and* "Damn the flag," *the excited people again surge against the Frietchie house, breaking the window glass with sticks and stones, while a boy climbs a pillar of the balcony and tries to tear down the flag.* BARBARA, *hardly knowing what she does, with the thought of her dead lover in the room behind her, bruised by the stones thrown by the angry mob below her, clings to the flag.*

It is seen that she is trying to speak, and the crowd, moved by curiosity, suddenly hush to hear her.

BARBARA. Shoot! You've taken a life already, dearer to me than my own. Shoot, and I'll *thank* you! but *spare* your flag!

[JACKSON, *passing the house, has seen and heard. He cries out.*

STONEWALL JACKSON. Halt! Who touches a hair of that woman, dies like a dog! [*A short pause.*] Pass the word along! [*An Aide leaves* JACKSON, *and passes along behind the soldiers. A moment after, a man's voice is heard in the distance giving this order:* "Who harms the girl on a balcony with a Union flag will be shot!" *This is followed by another man's voice, still further off, repeating the order.* JACKSON *gives the order to continue the march.*] Forward! March!

[*The soldiers start marching, singing at the*

same time. BARBARA, *holding on to the flag, half-fainting, supports herself against the balcony railing. Her head is lifted, her expression exalted. The people are half of them singing with the soldiers and half shouting hurrahs, the women greeting their especial friends with flowers. Finally,* COL. NEGLY *leads on his company,* JACK *among them.* JACK *sees* BARBARA, *and, quietly and quickly aiming, shoots her. There is a cry and a gasp of horror from the crowd in unison. The soldiers halt, the singing of those in sight stops.* SUE, *who sees* BARBARA, *with a wild scream fights her way through the crowd and the soldiers, crying:* "Barbara! Barbara! Barbara!" *There is a great commotion everywhere. "Dixie" is heard faintly from the soldiers in the distance, who have not yet*

heard of something happening. BARBARA, *when shot, has fallen back against the house, still clinging to the flag. After a moment, she staggers forward and falls, kneeling on the balcony, her head and arms hanging over.*

COL. NEGLY. Who fired that shot?

JACK. [*Proudly, quite mad.*] *I* did!

[*He lifts a pistol quickly to his head, but is seized and pinioned by two soldiers before he can fire.* COL. NEGLY *starts back in horror at the confession of his dearly loved son. He loses his control for a minute, and cannot speak.*

FIRST SOLDIER. What shall we do with him, Colonel?

[MAMMY LU *has come onto the balcony with* SUE, *and kneels by* BARBARA.

COL. NEGLY. [*With a great effort regains his self-control, and, though his voice trembles, he still speaks*

with the authority of an officer.] Carry out your orders! Forward! March!

[*The procession marches on over the flower-strewn pavement, the people and soldiers in silence, the strains of "My Country, 'tis of Thee" in the air, as*

THE CURTAIN FALLS

CAPTAIN JINKS OF THE HORSE MARINES

A FANTASTIC COMEDY IN THREE ACTS

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By LITTLE, BROWN, AND COMPANY.

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To V. G.

IN GRATEFUL APPRECIATION
OF A NEVER FAILING
SYMPATHY WITH AND UNDERSTANDING
OF ALL MY WORK
AND PLAY

New York, 1902.

CAPTAIN JINKS OF THE HORSE MARINES

THE FIRST ACT. The Landing Dock of the Cunard Steamship Company in New York.

The End of October.

THE SECOND ACT. Madame Trentoni's Parlor in the Brevoort House.

A Fortnight Later.

THE THIRD ACT. Still at Madame Trentoni's in the Brevoort House.

The Same Night.

Time and Place

New York City in the Early Seventies.

The costumes were designed by Mr. Percy Anderson and from Godey's *Ladies' Book.*

The play was produced under the management of Mr. Charles Frohman.

PERSONS CONCERNED IN THE PLAY

Captain Robert Carrolton Jinks.

Charles La Martine.

Augustus Bleeker Van Vorkenburg.

Professor Belliarti.

The Herald Reporter.

The Tribune Reporter.

The Times Reporter.

The Sun Reporter.

The Clipper Representative.

A Newsboy.

An Official Detective.

A Sailor.

A Policeman.

Sailors, Domestics, and New Yorkers.

Madame Trentoni (Aurelia Johnson).

Mrs. Greenborough.

Mrs. Jinks.

Mrs. Stonington.

Miss Merriam.

1st Ballet Lady (Miss Pettitoes).

2d Ballet Lady.

3d Ballet Lady.

4TH BALLET LADY (FRÄULEIN HOCHSPITZ).
5TH BALLET LADY.
6TH BALLET LADY (MRS. MAGGITT).
7TH BALLET LADY.
MARY. *Madame Trentoni's Maid.*

Originally produced at the Garrick Theatre, New York, February 4, 1901, where it played through the entire season, and was revived at the beginning of the next. On February 18, 1907, at the Empire Theatre, New York, it was again revived, with Bruce McRae as Captain Jinks; otherwise, all the other speaking parts were unchanged.

Captain Robert Carrolton Jinks	H. Reeves-Smith
Charles La Martine	George W. Howard
Augustus Bleeker Van Vorkenburg	H. S. Tabor
Professor Belliarti	Edwin Stevens
The Herald Reporter	John R. Sumner
The Tribune Reporter	Charles Marriott
The Times Reporter	Harry E. Asmus
The Sun Reporter	William Barstow Smith
The Clipper Representative	Gardner Jenkins
A Newsboy (Peter)	John Hughes
An Official Detective	Lewis Wood
A Sailor	Lorenzo Hale
A Policeman	M. J. Gallagher
A Telegraph Boy	Harry Barton

Sailors, Domestics, and New Yorkers.

Madame Trentoni (Aurelia Johnson)	Ethel Barrymore
Mrs. Greenborough	Estelle Mortimer
Mrs. Jinks	Mrs. Thomas Whiffen
Mrs. Stonington	Fanny Addison Pitt
Miss Merriam	Sidney Cowell
1st Ballet Lady (Miss Pettitoes)	Lillian Thurgate
2d Ballet Lady	Margaret Dunn
3d Ballet Lady	Evelyn Jepson
4th Ballet Lady (Fräulein Hochspitz)	Anita Rothe
5th Ballet Lady	Anna Morrison
6th Ballet Lady (Mrs. Maggitt)	Kate Ten Eyck
7th Ballet Lady	Alice Bryan
Mary	Beatrice Agnew

THE FIRST ACT

THE LANDING DOCK OF THE CUNARD LINE. — *Late in the morning. The side of the vessel is seen on the Left, with the passengers' gang-plank coming down to the centre of the stage. Across the river at the back is seen Hoboken, with the Steevens house on the hill. It is a gray, misty day, with a drizzling rain which flatters the Jersey shore. The paraphernalia of a landing stage is littered about, and some small groups of luggage, arrived on the steamer, have not yet been removed. A* SAILOR *stands at the top of the gang-plank, keeping a bored guard. There is a* NEWSBOY *selling the Herald, Tribune, Times, Sun, Express, and Clipper.*

A tired STEWARD *now and then passes in sight, on the boat. A* POLICEMAN *walks in and out on the dock. It is raining, and every one enters with a wet umbrella. The* NEWSBOY *sitting on a barrel is whistling "Captain Jinks" and kicking his heels against the barrel; he offers the* POLICEMAN, *each time he passes him, a different paper. All the passengers, except* MADAME TRENTONI, *have long ago left the boat. Several truckmen and loafers are more or less busy on the premises.*

PETER. [*Whistling, interrupts himself as the* POLICEMAN *passes.*] Herald? [*The* POLICEMAN *pays no attention to the boy at any time.* PETER *always continues whistling at once when he gets no answer, and picks up the tune exactly where he left it off. The* POLICEMAN *repasses.*] *Tri*-bune? Express? [*He continues whistling.*

The POLICEMAN *repasses.*] Times? [*Continues whistling. The* POLICEMAN *repasses.*] World? Clipper? [*Continues whistling as the* POLICEMAN *passes out of sight.*

[*The* TRIBUNE REPORTER *hurries in. He goes quickly to the gang-plank, and starts to walk up it. The* SAILOR *at the top calls down, and stops him.*

THE SAILOR. Nobody ain't allowed on board.

[*The* NEWSBOY *laughs, and whistles pointedly, "Shoo Fly, don't bother me!"*

THE TRIBUNE REPORTER. Why not? I'm from the Tribune.

THE SAILOR. That don't make no difference, not if you was Boss Tweed from Tammany Hall!

THE TRIBUNE REPORTER. Madame Trentoni hasn't left the boat yet, has she?

THE SAILOR. There ain't no blamed Italyan on this yere boat!

THE TRIBUNE REPORTER. The young lady speaks English. I mean the great —

PETER. [*Stops whistling to interrupt.*] Say, Jack! He means the Primy Donner what the young Prince of Wales say is a A one-er.

THE SAILOR. Oh, you mean the Opry Singer! She'll be leaving soon, now. There's a good deal o' motion in her cabin, and there's eight men ordered below, a-struggling with her baggage.

THE TRIBUNE REPORTER. [*Eagerly, and with commendable zeal.*] How much baggage has she?

THE SAILOR. I dunno.

[*The* TRIBUNE REPORTER *comes back down the gang-plank.*

PETER. [*On the barrel.*] Have the *Tri*-bune?

THE TRIBUNE REPORTER. [*Grandiloquently, feeling very much the importance of his position, especially as there is no other reporter there.*] *I am* the Tribune!

[*He opens his umbrella, and places it on the floor to dry.*

PETER. [*Who is uneducated.*] Huh?

THE TRIBUNE REPORTER. *I* make the paper.

PETER. Where's your machine?

THE TRIBUNE REPORTER. [*Pointing to his forehead.*] Here!

PETER. Gee! I guess you're off your nut, ain't you?

THE TRIBUNE REPORTER. [*Obtusely.*] No, no, my boy. I'm a reporter.

PETER. All right, boss, but you ain't the only party what's after Miss Squeeler in there!

THE TRIBUNE REPORTER. [*With supreme elegance.*] Other gentlemen of the Press, I presume?

PETER. Naw, it ain't no gentlemen — it's a big toff — a regular lardy-dah! — what's been down here twice already with a gang of dandies and a brass band! The band was real discouraged the second time — was playing "Hail, Columbia" for all she was worth!

THE TRIBUNE REPORTER. I know about that. The Herald man got on to it yesterday. Hello, Times!

[*As the* TIMES REPORTER *comes on.*

THE TIMES REPORTER. Is she out yet?

THE TRIBUNE REPORTER. No. But look here, — Captain Jinks has been here with his chums, and a band in their uniforms straight from the Republican Parade.

THE TIMES REPORTER. If those fellows get hold of her first, we boys won't have a chance at an interview.

THE TRIBUNE REPORTER. Are they coming back?

PETER. Well, the band was a-kickin', but I guess the swells'll be back, because they was full of bokays.

THE TRIBUNE REPORTER. They had a tug engaged to go over the bar to meet the boat to-morrow. Nobody ever dreamed she'd be in before. Think of crossing the ocean in fourteen days — it's a record-breaker! Mapleson calmly went on to Boston, to come back to-night, or he'd be fixing everything for us!

THE TIMES REPORTER. I tell you what, we'll go get the boys now, quick, so we can all have a fair show together, and leave this

youngster to tell Captain Jinks and his crowd, when they come back, that the lady won't —

[*Interrupted.*

PETER. She ain't no common *lady;* she's a Opry Singer what the Prince of Wales —

[*Interrupted.*

THE TRIBUNE REPORTER. Yes, yes! Mapleson gave us that story weeks ago. You tell Captain Jinks that Madame Trentoni won't leave the boat till after lunch. Are you fly?

PETER. What's it worth?

THE TIMES REPORTER. What'll you take?

PETER. You make *me* an offer.

THE TRIBUNE REPORTER. We'll give you a quarter. [*The* NEWSBOY *gives the* TRIBUNE REPORTER *one look, and then, sticking his thumbs in the armholes of his waistcoat, he whistles "Shoo Fly, don't bother me!"*] Well, what's the matter?

PETER. You get some one else to do your job. I go to Sunday-school, an' I don't tell lies for nothing.

THE TIMES REPORTER. We'll give you a dollar.

PETER. All right! Pay in advance?

THE TRIBUNE REPORTER. Not by a long shot! Collect on delivery — of the lie! I'll go after the men, Jimmie, and you hang around out of the way here — just to keep an eye on the boy and see he *does his work!*

[*Picking up his umbrella, he goes out on to the street.*

PETER. Gee! Lyin's no work fur me — it's play! That there about going to Sunday-school was a sample.

THE TIMES REPORTER. Look out! Here they come. [*Goes outside, by the boat.*

[*Three men are heard singing "Captain Jinks of the Horse Marines," faintly, then more loudly, as they approach and come on through the big doorway on the Right. The three men are* CHARLIE, GUSSIE, *and* CAPTAIN JINKS. *They are good-looking young dandies,* GUSSIE *being more of a fop than the others,* CAPTAIN JINKS *himself having a superb figure and a frank handsome face. All he needs is one lesson to make a fine man of him. The three march in, arm in arm,* CAPTAIN JINKS *in the centre. They wear scarlet uniforms and big bearskin caps. Each carries a bouquet of the period,—small, with a flounce of lace around it. Their singing and marching are of course simply a joke among themselves. The* POLICEMAN *meets them, coming from the opposite side.*

THE POLICEMAN. Here! Here! No visitors allowed on this yere dock without a permission.

CAPTAIN JINKS. I say, Charlie — Gussie — who's got the permission? [*Each one begins with his right-hand pocket, and all look through their pockets in unison, without success; then* CAPTAIN JINKS *removes his hat, and triumphantly takes out a piece of paper.*] Here you are, Mr. Policeman!

THE POLICEMAN. [*Not taking the paper.*] All right! [*And passes on.*

CAPTAIN JINKS. [*To* PETER, *who sits whistling on the barrel.*] Well, Horace Greeley, any signs of the Opera Queen yet?

PETER. Nope. Where's the band?

CAPTAIN JINKS. The band has struck, so we did our best without it.

PETER. Well, say, she ain't up yet — she

ain't to leave the boat for a couple of hours yet.

CAPTAIN JINKS. What a sell!

GUSSIE. What a bore!

CHARLIE. What a damn shame!

[*The men are much disappointed, and all speak at once.*

CAPTAIN JINKS. Who told you?

PETER. Jack Tar up there.

[*At this moment two sailors appear on the ship, and struggle down the gang-plank with a large trunk, which they place at one side, and return up the gang-plank.*

CHARLIE. Well, come along, Captain Jinks. We can't hang around here all morning!

GUSSIE. Let's go up town to Union Square, and have a drink.

CAPTAIN JINKS. No, no, fellows, we might

miss her; some other crowd'll get hold of her and spoil our fun.

CHARLIE. Every one's on the *qui vive* to entertain her. We must fill her time for a week with engagements before she leaves this dock.

GUSSIE. Yes, siree, by Jove! — so every one in town will see we have the inside track!

CAPTAIN JINKS. [*Indicating* PETER.] Get rid of the kid.

CHARLIE. Go 'long, Horace Greeley! *Scoot!*

PETER. I can't.

CAPTAIN JINKS. Why not?

PETER. I got to sell my papers.

CAPTAIN JINKS. Sell them somewhere else.

PETER. Nope! I got to sell 'em here. If you want me to get out, you got to *buy* me out.

CAPTAIN JINKS. Well, how many papers have you?

PETER. A dollar-and-a-half's worth.

CAPTAIN JINKS. What'll you take for them?

PETER. A dollar-sixty!

CAPTAIN JINKS. No, you won't! Come along, boys, chip in fifty cents each.

[*He starts singing "Up in a Balloon, Boys." The others join in, diving into their waistcoat pockets, and each pitches half a dollar into* CAPTAIN JINKS' *hat.*

[*Two sailors bring down another big trunk and, depositing it near the first, return to the ship.*

CAPTAIN JINKS. [*To* PETER.] Here you are!

[*Giving the money.*

[*The men stop singing. The* NEWSBOY, *with his cap on one side, swaggers off, whistling "Up in a Balloon, Boys," but steals immediately back, and hides under the gangplank.*

CAPTAIN JINKS. I say, I'll match you both to see who pays for the landau to take her away.

CHARLIE. In the name of all three of us?

CAPTAIN JINKS. Oh, yes; but match who pays! [*Each gets out his coin.*] You first, Charlie, match me!

[*They throw the coins.*

CHARLIE. Heads!

CAPTAIN JINKS. Good! Gussie!

[*He and* GUSSIE *throw.*

GUSSIE. Tails!

CAPTAIN JINKS. Bravo! You pay for the landau, Gussie. Thank you, old man.

[*Shaking his hand.*

CHARLIE. [*Also shaking his hand.*] Thank you!

GUSSIE. Botheration!

CAPTAIN JINKS. Hello, Jack! Is that little Italian bird on board awake yet?

[*The sailors bring down another trunk.*

THE SAILOR. Oh, yes; she's busy giving presents to all the deck-hands.

[*They go back on to the ship.*

CAPTAIN JINKS. I'll tell you what I'll do, fellows. I'll bet you five hundred dollars —

[*Interrupted.*

CHARLIE. I haven't got it!

CAPTAIN JINKS. [*Laughing.*] Well, Gussie'll lend it to you, — won't you, Gussie?

CHARLIE. That's so. 'Course he will!

CAPTAIN JINKS. I'll bet you both five hundred that I'll make love to her.

CHARLIE. [*Laughing.*] That's nothing. I'd make love to anything for five hundred dollars.

CAPTAIN JINKS. [*Laughing.*] Go West! I

mean I'll bet you five hundred dollars I'll get up a flirtation with her.

CHARLIE. Make it a thousand.

CAPTAIN JINKS. Will you lend Charlie a thousand, Gussie?

CHARLIE. Yes; of course he will!

CAPTAIN JINKS. All right. Good!

CHARLIE. Done! [*They shake hands.*] I think I ought to stand some chance with the fair lady — she may have broken the hearts of the blue-bloods of Europe, but, after all, my great-great-grandfather settled in Maryland, driven from France by the Huguenot troubles, and my family is connected with the royal blood of France. We haven't a cent left; still, I think I can hold my own.

CAPTAIN JINKS. [*Bored.*] Oh, all right, Charlie.

GUSSIE. You're not the only lardy-dah here. My ancestor, the first Van Vorkenburg, came over with Peter Stuyvesant, and was an early Dutch Governor of New York. My family has always been mixed up with the government of the country. My father is a politician now, and so we've never had to work for our living.

CHARLIE. Give us a rest!

CAPTAIN JINKS. Hold on a minute. What's the matter with my family! I'm Captain Jinks of the Horse Marines, formerly of Richmond, Virginia; a member of one of those real old Southern families you read about, ruined by the Civil War — only, as a matter of fact, we were dead broke before the war began! However, never mind! Now, you boys go and get the landau.

CHARLIE. Not if we know it! She might

come out while we were gone, and that would give you an advantage. I'm not losing Gussie's thousand so easily! I intend to get up a flirtation with her myself.

GUSSIE. Well, so do I, by Jove!

CAPTAIN JINKS. Oh, do you! Another five hundred that neither of you get your arm around her waist! [*Shaking hands with both, quickly.*] And come on now, *we'll all three go* after the landau.

[*They link arms, and go out singing "Walking down Broadway." As they go, the* NEWSBOY *climbs up from under the gang-plank and, placing two fingers of his hand in his mouth, whistles a piercing signal twice — then waves his cap. The* TIMES REPORTER *runs in.*

THE TIMES REPORTER. Is she coming?

PETER. No; but I got sumthin' to tell you — I mean, to *sell* you!

[*The* POLICEMAN *enters, and gives the* SAILOR *a bit of chewing-tobacco, which he takes and says* "Thank ye" *for.*

THE TIMES REPORTER. What is it?

PETER. Pst!

[*Motioning toward the* SAILOR *and* POLICEMAN, *who will hear.*

SAILOR. [*Who stands by.*] Hello, she's a-comin' now, I guess. The old party's between decks with full sail on.

PETER. What do you say to this?

[*Motioning the* TIMES REPORTER *to one side, where he whispers to him in dumb show all about the three men and their bet. Surprise, curiosity, and delight are shown by the* TIMES REPORTER. *Meanwhile, an official,*

a PRIVATE DETECTIVE, *in plain clothes, has sauntered in, and meets the* POLICEMAN, *who has started back toward the street.*

THE DETECTIVE. [*In semi-confidential tone.*] I understand there's a Oppry Singer on board this here boat who's goin' to land this A.M., with costumes and jewelry and a cart-load of stuff. Not off yet, eh?

THE POLICEMAN. [*Very supercilious.*] Naw!

THE DETECTIVE. Well, there's a suspicion she may try to do a bit of smuggling, and I'm detailed special to see there's no bribing of our officials. I shall do the examination myself. [*He opens his coat, showing the official badge on his breast.*] Just be on hand in case there's a little job for you.

THE POLICEMAN. [*With a very different manner — most obsequious — touches his hat.*] Yes, surr.

THE DETECTIVE. Be in ear-shot, and if you hear me whistle twice, like this [*whistling twice*] — why, come along.

THE POLICEMAN. [*Touching his hat.*] Yes, surr.

[*He offers the* DETECTIVE *a piece of chewing-tobacco.*

THE DETECTIVE. Oh, thank you.

[*Takes a bite, and returns the "plug."*

[*The* POLICEMAN *passes out. Meanwhile, the* NEWSBOY *and the* TIMES REPORTER *have finished.*

THE TIMES REPORTER. Look here. Keep mum about this, and I'll make it worth your while. I've got to consult with Mr. Mapleson before I publish a thing like that, but, if it ever *is* published, it's got to be *my* story! Why, I ought to get a rise of salary if I get that for my paper.

[*The* DETECTIVE *starts to go as four men enter hurriedly, breathless, running in, all with dripping umbrellas, — the* HERALD REPORTER, *the* SUN REPORTER, *the* TRIBUNE REPORTER, *and the* CLIPPER REPRESENTATIVE.

ALL THE REPORTERS. Off yet?

[*Almost knocking over the* DETECTIVE.

THE DETECTIVE. Excuse me, gentlemen.

[*And exits.*

THE TIMES REPORTER. No — but she's expected shortly. Where's the Express? the World?

THE CLIPPER REPRESENTATIVE. They're waiting at the Brevoort House with her maid and old Belliarti.

THE TRIBUNE REPORTER. Where's the bouquet?

THE SUN REPORTER. Here.

[*They all gather around him, and unwrap a huge and beautiful bouquet, which is covered with five different newspapers — the latter soaking wet from the rain.*

THE TRIBUNE REPORTER. We protected it from the rain with a representative sheet of each one of us, so as to show no partiality, and have the bouquet represent in every way the United Press of New York!

[*The bouquet is in the shape of a cone, whose base is nearly a yard in diameter. There are two tiers of red and white roses, alternating, and the structure is crowned by one important calla lily. A large bow, with streamers of red, white, and blue ribbon, adds a last gala and patriotic note!*

[MRS. GREENBOROUGH *appears on the ship, and hesitates at the top of the gang-plank.*

PETER. [*Aside to the* SAILOR.] Come on, let's sell 'em. Here's the old lady — let's pretend she's the Primy Donny!

THE SAILOR. [*Chuckling.*] You're a rum un!

[*He goes up the gang-plank to help* MRS. GREENBOROUGH.

PETER. Hi! Pst! [*Whistles again between his fingers. The* REPORTERS *all turn; the bouquet is unwrapped.*] Here she is!

[MRS. GREENBOROUGH *comes down the gang-plank. She is a pretty, middle-aged lady, kind, motherly, and a little foolish. She has one especial characteristic: she talks whenever started in a steady stream, but never finishes a speech, as no one will wait for her, but either interrupts or leaves her. When interrupted, she invariably stops short, with a broad and sweet smile, good-naturedly accepting what has become for her the inevi-*

table. She is dressed a few years behind the times, but is somewhat prejudiced against the quiet colors. All the REPORTERS *drop their umbrellas, and rush to meet her. They reach the foot of the gang-plank just as she does, and, gathering all to the right side, bow low and offer her the big bouquet.*

THE TIMES REPORTER. Welcome, Madame, to our great Country! The American Eagle, whose own high C carries from the shores of the Atlantic to the Pacific's golden strand, welcomes her Sister Song-bird! And the Press of New York offer their united compliments and felicitations with the accompanying bouquet.

[*Giving the bouquet with a bow which he has copied from one of Lester Wallack's. All the* REPORTERS *applaud.*

THE HERALD REPORTER. Bravo, Pat!

[*The* NEWSBOY, *on his barrel, and the* SAILOR, *at the top of the gang-plank, are very much amused.* MRS. GREENBOROUGH *is tremendously surprised, and, taking the bouquet, is followed to one side by all the* REPORTERS, *who encircle her.*

MRS. GREENBOROUGH. My word! I never was so surprised in all my life, nor so overpowered, nor so fluctuated either, for I'm sure I'm speechless, I can't say a word! Only fancy, this is the first booky I've had donated to me since my old gentleman used to call me pretty pet names in the gone-by days!

[*She continues talking a steady stream, but the* TIMES *and the* HERALD REPORTERS *come away from the others, and speak to each other, aside.*

THE HERALD REPORTER. For Heaven's sake, there must be some mistake!

THE TIMES REPORTER. *She* eighteen years old? She's three times eighteen!

THE HERALD REPORTER. Does Mapleson want to tell us the Prince gave *grandma* an emerald bracelet?

PETER. [*Innocently.*] Gee! I made a mistake. That ain't the party; that must be her mother.

THE TIMES REPORTER. Oh, it's the companion, of course! What idiots! Get back the bouquet!

THE HERALD REPORTER. How? [*Calls.*] Bill!

[*The* TRIBUNE REPORTER *joins them.*

THE TRIBUNE REPORTER. She can't be —

[*Interrupted by:*

THE HERALD REPORTER. No, no, it's the chaperon! Go on — get back the bouquet.

THE TRIBUNE REPORTER. What! get it back? I can't. Here! Pete!

[*The* SUN REPORTER *leaves* MRS. GREENBOROUGH *gladly.*

THE SUN REPORTER. Say, shorthand isn't quick enough to take down *her* conversation.

THE TRIBUNE REPORTER. Don't bother. It's the wrong party. Get back the bouquet.

THE SUN REPORTER. Ask for it, or grab it?

[*The* CLIPPER REPRESENTATIVE *quickly joins them from* MRS. GREENBOROUGH, *who is still talking, and she raises her voice a little as they leave her, but, seeing their backs toward her, breaks off in the middle of a sentence, smiling, and smells her bouquet.*

THE SUN REPORTER, THE TIMES REPORTER,

THE TRIBUNE REPORTER, and THE HERALD REPORTER. [*All together.*] We've made a mistake!

[*The* NEWSBOY *whistles shrilly through his fingers, to attract their attention, and they all turn quickly to look, as* AURELIA *appears on the ship. She is quite the most lovely creature that ever came, like Venus Aphrodite, from the sea! Youth and beauty join in making her adorable, and a charming individuality, with a sense of humor bewilderingly attractive, makes her victory over mere man, irrespective of age or station, child's play. Her modish bustle only accentuates the grace of her girlish figure. And even a "water-fall" only seems to make a friendly background for her perfect brow and finely poised head. She carries in her arms a*

very small black-and-tan dog; she wears an ermine fur tippet, and carries a muff. The REPORTERS *quickly draw up to one side.* AURELIA *stops at the top of the gang-plank for a moment, looking around her and smiling, and then runs gaily down.*

AURELIA. Hip! hip! hurrah! Here we are at last on American soil — planks — never mind, *soil — E Pluribus Unum!*

[*She stands by the foot of the gang-plank. All the* REPORTERS *raise their hats.*

MRS. GREENBOROUGH. [*Accustomed to* AURELIA'S *beauty, and at present entirely self-absorbed.*] Oh, Aurelia, darling, do look at the beautiful booky these dear Americans have given me; did you ever see — [*Interrupted.*

AURELIA. No, I never did! Good morning, gentlemen! [*All the* REPORTERS *bow low.*

THE TIMES REPORTER. [*Stepping slightly forward.*] Welcome, Madame, to our great Country! The American Eagle, whose own high C carries from the shores of the Atlantic to the Pacific's golden strand, welcomes her Sister Song-bird! And the Press of New York offer their united compliments and felicitations with the — with — with the bouquet which will arrive at your hotel this evening!

AURELIA. Thank you very much, I'm sure. Here, Mrs. Gee; please hold Camille. [*Giving the small black-and-tan dog to* MRS. GREENBOROUGH.] I call him *Camille* because *Marguerite Gautier* is so long, and I wanted to name him after my first great success. You are all the Reporters, aren't you? [*Smiling ravishingly, straight into every one of their faces.*] They told me you'd be here. [*She shakes hands*

all around with each one of them, as she speaks.] I'm so glad; I'm dying to be interviewed! [*Laughing.*

THE HERALD REPORTER. [*Apropos of her walk.*] We see you have the Saratoga stride in England.

AURELIA. You mean my walk? With the Grecian bend? Oh, but we call it the Brighton Dip. Yes, it's very fashionable with us!

THE TRIBUNE REPORTER. To what hotel do you go?

AURELIA. The Brevoort House, on the Fifth Avenue, at Eighth Street. I'm told that is best, and not so far up-town as the Fifth Avenue Hotel on the Broadway.

THE TIMES REPORTER. And much nearer the new Academy of Music where you are to sing.

AURELIA. Did Mrs. Greenborough present herself?

MRS. GREENBOROUGH. No, I thought I'd better —

[*She stops short with a smile, interrupted.*

AURELIA. Quite right. This is my aunt, gentlemen. [*Elaborate bows.*] Ballet girls and Opéra Comique singers are obliged to have a mother, you know; but Grand Opera and Shakespeare can travel with an *aunt.*

MRS. GREENBOROUGH. Fancy, I haven't yet half thanked —

[*Smiles, interrupted.*

AURELIA. [*Interrupting.*] What lovely weather! I've always heard so much of your American climate.

THE TIMES REPORTER. But we call this very bad.

AURELIA. Not to me, I assure you, who sailed from *Liverpool.* I call it almost sunny! Only, dear me, very warm! [*Taking off her furs and placing them on a trunk.*] They told me it was so cold here!

THE HERALD REPORTER. And how do you like America?

AURELIA. Oh, I adore it! It's superb! [*Looking about her at the little dock, and speaking in the stereotyped manner.*] It's so enormous, so great a country! I'm amazed at its size! [*Then, coming down to a more natural manner, she laughs.*] Of course I've not seen very much yet. What town is that across the river over there? Is that Boston?

THE TIMES REPORTER. No, that's Hoboken!

AURELIA. Oh!—a suburb, I presume.

THE TIMES REPORTER. Yes, of *Hamburg.*

AURELIA. I hope to see a great deal of your country. I'm mad to go to A. T. Stewart's shop, and to see Saratoga, which I've heard heaps about! And the very first morning I have free from a rehearsal, I've promised myself I shall run over to Niagara Falls and back! [*All the* REPORTERS *are following her with lightning rapidity, looking up now and then, smiling and nodding to her as she talks.*] Mrs. Gee!

MRS. GREENBOROUGH. Yes, my love?

AURELIA. Do go see why they don't bring out the rest of my luggage! [*To the* REPORTERS.] There are forty-eight boxes.

MRS. GREENBOROUGH. Don't you want — [*Interrupted.*

AURELIA. Nothing, dear heart, — please go. [MRS. GREENBOROUGH *goes up the gang-plank into the boat.* AURELIA *continues to the* RE-

PORTERS.] Did you get that? I have *forty-eight boxes.*

THE TIMES REPORTER. That's a good many more even than Parepa-Rosa brought over!

AURELIA. Oh, but she depended entirely on her voice!

THE TRIBUNE REPORTER. What did you make your *début* in?

AURELIA. "La Traviata"; has it been sung here yet? [*Sitting on one of her trunks.*

THE TIMES REPORTER. Oh, yes, often, but we understood there was a probability of changing.

AURELIA. [*In surprise.*] Changing? Why?

THE TIMES REPORTER. Well — er — there have been several letters written to the Evening Post asking that you make your *début* in a less *risqué* opera.

AURELIA. But it's my *great* success!

THE TIMES REPORTER. The Ladies' Anti-French Literature League is leading the movement. There's a great feeling against the *play*. Lots of people won't go to see it.

AURELIA. But how absurd — no one ever understands what an Italian opera is about! Oh, dear, I hope I shall be a success! I'm awfully nervous. Oh, *please* like me!

[*The* REPORTERS *stop scribbling a moment to throw up their hats and shout.*

ALL THE REPORTERS. We do!

[*Two sailors bring more luggage, and go back.*

AURELIA. I'm afraid you'll think me a very foolish young person, — I do so want you to like me. You know I'm really an American!

[*All the* REPORTERS *look up, surprised.*

THE HERALD REPORTER. Really?

AURELIA. Yes, my father came from *Trenton*, New Jersey. [*All the* REPORTERS *drop their heads quickly to their tablets, and go on taking notes at a furious rate.*] That's how I get my name — "Trentoni" — don't you see? I'm a *New Jersey* Italian! My real name is Johnson, but of course that wouldn't look at all well on the bills, — "Miss Aurelia Johnson in 'Semiramide'!" I haven't been in America since I was three years old, but really it does all look familiar! At least I wish it did!

THE TRIBUNE REPORTER. [*As they all write.*] You were taught singing in Italy?

AURELIA. Yes, my mother sang in the chorus with Titians, and the night I was born she represented a princess at a ball, in the second act — so you see, I am really of noble birth! I was left an orphan at three, and then my

best friend, Signor Belliarti, took care of me, like a father and mother both. You know Papa Belliarti?

THE HERALD REPORTER. Yes, we've heard the story. Your ballet master, I believe?

AURELIA. Yes, bless him! He's worn the same pattern of clothes for fifty years! Would as soon think of changing his affections as altering the cut of his coat. It was through his friendship with Arditi, I had my chance with Mapleson in London, where I've sung principally, the last two years.

THE TIMES REPORTER. Do you know the Royal Family?

AURELIA. Er — not intimately — that is to say — *personally* — but I know them very well — *by sight!* You see they don't go to the Opera since the death of the Prince Consort.

MRS. GREENBOROUGH. [*Comes back down the gang-plank.*] My dear young gentlemen! She's turned the heads —

[*Stops with a smile, interrupted.*

AURELIA. [*Rising.*] Please get out my pink dolman; this one is so warm.

MRS. GREENBOROUGH. But tell them how the *élite* —

[*Stops with a smile, interrupted, and goes to a large bundle of shawls, which she undoes, and takes out the pink dolman.*

AURELIA. Oh, yes, the Uppertendom have been entrancingly kind to me. But I'll tell you a secret: I want the big *crowd* to love me! I want to outdo Lydia Thompson! I want to win the hearts of the gallery boys!

PETER. [*Throws his cap up in the air and shouts.*] Hooray!

AURELIA. [*Seeing him.*] What a nice boy! Mrs. Gee, give him a sixpence! Oh, dear, how much is a sixpence?

THE TRIBUNE REPORTER. Twelve cents.

AURELIA. Then give him a twelve-cent piece; it's one of those little silver things, you know.

[MRS. GREENBOROUGH *does so.*

[*Sailors bring down more luggage, and again go back. A* TELEGRAPH BOY *enters with a telegram.*

TELEGRAPH BOY. Madame Trentoni?

ALL THE REPORTERS. [*Going to the boy.*] Yes!

[*They go back in a body to* AURELIA. *The* TIMES REPORTER *gives her the telegram.*

AURELIA. [*Opening it.*] A wire! How entrancing!

TELEGRAPH BOY. Somebody sign?

[*The* TRIBUNE REPORTER *grandiloquently signs, and the* TELEGRAPH BOY *leaves.*

AURELIA. It's from Mapleson; he'll arrive at four! Didn't expect the ship in till to-morrow! Wasn't it superb, our trip! We broke the record for the Atlantic. A good omen for me. Only think, we crossed in *thirteen* days! It takes your breath away!

THE TRIBUNE REPORTER. We'll cross in less than ten days yet!

AURELIA. Oh, dear, I shouldn't like to go so fast as that; it would make me dizzy!

MRS. GREENBOROUGH. Here is your dolman, my dear. I don't know if —

[*Interrupted.*

[*The* TIMES REPORTER *and* TRIBUNE REPORTER *both take hold of the dolman.*

AURELIA. [*Laughing.*] No, wait! Let me see, there must be no partiality. [*She offers her right arm to the* HERALD REPORTER, *who pulls off that sleeve.*] Thank you! [*She turns to the*

SUN REPORTER *and offers her left arm. He pulls off the left sleeve.*] Thank you. [*Taking the jacket from the* SUN REPORTER, *she gives it to the* CLIPPER REPRESENTATIVE.] Will you give that to Mrs. Greenborough, please? [*He does so, and* MRS. GREENBOROUGH *puts it away among the straps.* AURELIA, *turning to the* TRIBUNE REPORTER *and* TIMES REPORTER, *who hold the dolman between them.*] Now, together, gentlemen, please. [*She turns her back upon them, and they place the dolman on her shoulders; turning quickly again, she curtsies low to all of the* REPORTERS, *laughingly.*] Thank you all, very much!

[*The* REPORTERS *take off their hats and bow.*

[*Sailors bring out more luggage.*

THE HERALD REPORTER. Are you interested at all in politics?

AURELIA. Oh, yes, I *adore* politics! Don't all women?

THE HERALD REPORTER. We're having a pretty severe campaign here between Grant and Greeley. I don't suppose you remember the War?

AURELIA. Oh, yes, I do, — perfectly. Why, I was thirteen years old.

THE TIMES REPORTER. Impossible! Mr. Mapleson says that you are now only eighteen.

AURELIA. Does he! [*She laughs.*] Oh, well, that's only *operatically* I'm eighteen, but *politically* I'm twenty-two! Of course, I never approved of but *one* kind of *slaves* — *men* slaves!

THE HERALD REPORTER. You have [*looking about him*] *five* here!

[*More bows.*

AURELIA. Bravo! Now, you know an Eng-

lishman wouldn't have thought of that till to-night, and then he'd have mailed it to me on a post-card.

THE HERALD REPORTER. Who do you favor for President?

AURELIA. [*Smiling.*] Oh, I don't know. Who do you?

THE HERALD REPORTER. Ah! but that's what we want to get out of you!

AURELIA. [*Taking him one side, and linking her arm confidentially in his.*] Now, look here, let's keep this between ourselves. Who does your Journal?

THE HERALD REPORTER. [*Rather flattered.*] General Grant!

AURELIA. Of course! [*She shakes hands with the* REPORTER.] A great general, and I *adore* soldiers.

THE TRIBUNE REPORTER. No stealing a march!

THE HERALD REPORTER. Oh, that's all right!

[*He joins the others.*

AURELIA. [*Taking the* TRIBUNE REPORTER *to one side.*] What's your paper?

THE TRIBUNE REPORTER. The Tribune, founded by the Democratic candidate for President, Horace Greeley.

AURELIA. [*Aside to the* TRIBUNE REPORTER.] He founded a newspaper, did he? Then he's my man, for what would we artists do without the Press? I adore the Press!

[*They rejoin the others.*

[SAILORS *bring on more luggage.*

THE SAILOR. Will you have the live-stock out, too, ma'am?

AURELIA. Oh, the darlings! Yes, indeed.

[*The* SAILORS *go back on to the ship.*] My other dogs. [*To* MRS. GREENBOROUGH.] But that's not all my luggage.

MRS. GREENBOROUGH. Papa Belliarti and your maid took your stage clothes with them to the hotel early this morning.

AURELIA. [*Cries out.*] Papa Belliarti was *here*, and I didn't see him!

MRS. GREENBOROUGH. You were asleep, and he wouldn't have you wakened.

AURELIA. [*Excitedly.*] Dear old darling! When I haven't slept a wink all night! I was so excited, knowing I'd see him this morning. Let's make haste! I'm afraid, gentlemen, I must ask you now to excuse me. Oh, but just wait a minute. Mrs. Gee, give me my camel's-hair shawl from the Queen — *from the Queen!* [*Repeating with emphasis lest the* REPORTERS

should not catch it, and, watching them from the corner of her eye to see the effect, she throws off her dolman and takes the shawl from MRS. GREENBOROUGH.] It is easier to wear during the examination. I — er — I presume you are all taking notes of my dress.

THE HERALD REPORTER. [*Smiling.*] Well, we're doing our best.

AURELIA. Listen; I'll get Mrs. Gee to help you. Mrs. Gee, give me another hat, too; I'm tired of this one. Give me *the Empress Eugénie.* [*To the* REPORTERS.] The last bonnet she designed before her flight from the Tuileries! And it still holds its own.

[MRS. GREENBOROUGH *brings it, and* AURELIA *puts it on.*

MRS. GREENBOROUGH. Did you —

[*Interrupted.*

AURELIA. Yes, dear heart; now, go with these charming gentlemen, and describe all the things I've worn, *outside* things [*aside to her*], and just hint at silk linings and Valenciennes lace. I've been told they put everything in their awful papers over here!

MRS. GREENBOROUGH. I'm sure I'll be —

[*Interrupted.*

AURELIA. [*Pushing her toward the* REPORTERS.] Of course, who wouldn't be *delighted*, in such alluring company! Good morning, gentlemen!

ALL THE REPORTERS. [*Bowing.*] Good morning.

[*They go off to the street with* MRS. GREENBOROUGH, *she talking all the time, describing* AURELIA'S *dress, etc. The* HERALD REPORTER *hangs back.*

AURELIA. [*To the* HERALD REPORTER, *smiling,*

but kindly.] Don't mind interrupting the dear soul; she expects it, and besides, it rests her. We never let her finish a sentence for fear she would die of loss of breath at the end.

THE HERALD REPORTER. Thank you very much. And allow me to promise you a brilliant success. [*He starts to go.*

AURELIA. [*Hesitatingly.*] Are *all* reporters handsome?

THE HERALD REPORTER. [*Red, but happy.*] They would like to be in *your* eyes, Madame Trentoni.

[*He exits in a seventh heaven.*

AURELIA. [*Flicking her hand after him, calls:*] Superb! [*She turns to the* NEWSBOY.] Boy! Come here a minute! Now, between ourselves, tell me something! Which is the best paper here — which do you sell the most?

PETER. Lady, they all was second-class what was here; the only *real* paper in New York is "The Fireside Companion." [CAPTAIN JINKS, CHARLIE, *and* GUSSIE *are heard whistling "Captain Jinks" in the distance.*] Ma'am — there's some dandies here now to welcome you; hear 'em! There's been a political parade to-day, and they're all togged out in their uniforms! And I tell yer, they're high-steppers! A one-ers — blue-blooders, regular lardy-dahs!

[*The whistling changes to singing, and the three enter from the street, singing "Captain Jinks." They stop short in the middle of a word, as they see* AURELIA, *who, pretending not to notice them, looks at a label on a trunk. The* NEWSBOY *whistles "Up in a Balloon, Boys," and goes behind a trunk.*

CAPTAIN JINKS. She's off!

GUSSIE. She's a bouquet!

CHARLIE. She's a whole floral emblem! I will certainly do a little flirting here myself! Everything square now, fellows, and the best man wins! Go along, Captain Jinks, introduce your pals.

[*They step toward* AURELIA, CAPTAIN JINKS *slightly ahead. The* NEWSBOY *stops whistling.*

CAPTAIN JINKS. I beg your pardon, — Madame Trentoni?

AURELIA. [*Turns.*] Yes?

CAPTAIN JINKS. Pray allow us to welcome you to New York. Your coming turns October into June, and we will not miss the birds this Winter, since you will be singing in the Academy trees. [*Offering his bouquet.*

AURELIA. [*Takes his bouquet.*] Thank you very

much, but remember there are birds — and — *birds!*

CAPTAIN JINKS. May I present Mr. Charles La Martine?

CHARLIE. [*Bows and gives his bouquet.*] Twice welcome, Madame!

CAPTAIN JINKS. And may I present Mr. Augustus Van Vorkenburg? Familiarly known as "Gussie," also "Mother's Darling."

GUSSIE. [*To* CAPTAIN JINKS.] Shut up! [*Bows and gives his bouquet.*] *Thrice* welcome!

AURELIA. Thank you. [*To* CAPTAIN JINKS.] And now, won't one of your friends present *you?*

CHARLIE. This is Captain Jinks of the Horse Marines!

AURELIA. [*Laughing.*] Oh, yes; I've heard of him.

CAPTAIN JINKS. [*Embarrassed.*] No, no — I am Robert Jinks, tremendously at your service.

AURELIA. It doesn't really make any difference, because I never remember names, — but you are all very kind. I fancy you are some more reporters.

GUSSIE. [*Offended.*] Oh, I say, no!

AURELIA. [*Insinuatingly.*] I thought you might be, — they seem to be such *handsome* men!

CHARLIE. No. —

CAPTAIN JINKS. No. —

AURELIA. Oh, then you must be the *editors!*

CAPTAIN JINKS. [*Laughing.*] No, no, Madame, we won't deceive you. We are only three good-for-nothings who have engaged seats in the front row for your entire season.

AURELIA. If you want me to believe that,

do put on your hats, for you don't look the parts at all!

CHARLIE. We want to know if there is anything in the world we could do for you?

GUSSIE. We would like to plan something for your amusement; would you tell us your hotel?

AURELIA. [*After a second's pause.*] The Fifth Avenue.

[GUSSIE, *who is really an ass, ties a knot in his handkerchief so as to remember it.*

CAPTAIN JINKS. There is to be a croquet match day after to-morrow at the fashionable club; perhaps you would care to go. If so, we would be glad to arrange.

[MRS. GREENBOROUGH *comes back from her walk, having evidently been "shaken" by the* REPORTERS *at an "early stage in the game."*

AURELIA. You're very kind. I never could understand the game. But my chaperon adores it and would love to come, I'm sure.

CAPTAIN JINKS. [*Who has not seen* MRS. GREENBOROUGH.] We should be charmed.

GUSSIE. It'll be very dressy!

AURELIA. Dear Mrs. Gee, I want to present to you three New York *gentlemen* who have most kindly come to welcome us — Mrs. Greenborough.

[*The three men bow, saying* "Madame," *but with a note of poignant disappointment in their voices.*

AURELIA. And they *want* you, dear, to go to a croquet match with them.

MRS. GREENBOROUGH. [*Overjoyed.*] My word, and that will be a treat! Thank you very much, gentlemen! My love, here come your pets. What shall —

[*Interrupted, as the sailors enter with two large dogs — a Newfoundland and a white Spitz — and a very large cage, containing a small, live monkey. The second sailor returns to the boat, after putting the monkey down beside the gang-plank.*

AURELIA. Oh, yes, the darlings! [*Going to meet the sailor with the dogs. She stops to speak to* MRS. GREENBOROUGH.] Did you tell the reporters about that beastly monkey?

MRS. GREENBOROUGH. Oh, no, I forgot.

AURELIA. My dear, how careless of you! So long as Mapleson insists on my having the horrid thing, you should have said the Khedive of Egypt gave him to me; that would have sounded superbly. [*She goes to the sailor, and takes the leaders of the two dogs from him; the sailor goes back on to the boat.*] You blessed

old dogs, you! The poor things must be mad for a little exercise. Oh! Mr. ——?

[*In front of* CHARLIE.

CHARLIE. [*Flattered at being especially addressed.*] La Martine. [*Bowing.*

AURELIA. You said you wanted to do something for me; will you take Leonora for a walk?

CHARLIE. I beg your pardon?

AURELIA. [*Giving him the leader of the Newfoundland dog.*] This is Leonora, — out of "Trovatore," you know. Just a bit of a stroll and back, say ten minutes?

[*Looking him straight in the eyes and smiling sweetly.*

CHARLIE. With pleasure, if I mustn't go alone?

AURELIA. Certainly not. [*She crosses to* GUSSIE.] Mr. Dundreary —

GUSSIE. [*Bowing.*] Augustus Bleeker van Vorkenburg.

AURELIA. What a *grand* name! You'll go along and take Rosina — "Barber of Seville" — *won't* you — "*Gussie*"?—

GUSSIE. Ah! but Charlie and I are no company for each other.

AURELIA. [*Gaily.*] I see! You want ladies' society. Mrs. Gee! Mrs. Gee! [*Taking her arm.*] You want a little walk, too. Yes, you do! You'll never get that extra ten pounds off, if you lose a single morning. Take *Camille* along! [*Giving her the black-and-tan.*] Now, be off. Good-by, *darlings; that's* for the *dogs!*

CHARLIE. [*Turning.*] Which pair?

AURELIA. [*Laughing.*] Clever! very clever!

[CHARLIE, GUSSIE, *and the three dogs, and* MRS. GREENBOROUGH *exit,* MRS. GREEN-

BOROUGH *talking about how glad she is for a glimpse of land.*

CAPTAIN JINKS. Have you saved the monkey for me?

AURELIA. Oh! I wish you would! *Will you? Take* him and lose him. I'm afraid of him, you know.

CAPTAIN JINKS. Then why do you keep him?

AURELIA. It's Mapleson's idea. He thinks it makes me interesting. Though why a monkey should do that, I don't know; and I'd sleep happier to-night if that wretched animal was out of the way.

CAPTAIN JINKS. Would you mind walking a few steps over in that direction and keeping your back turned?

AURELIA. What are you going to do?

[*She goes a few steps to the Left, and stands with her back turned.*

[CAPTAIN JINKS *goes to the* NEWSBOY, *who is enjoying himself with the monkey in the cage. At the same time, the* SAILOR *comes out and down the gang-plank, and calls to* AURELIA.

THE SAILOR. Miss! Ma'am!

AURELIA. [*With her back turned.*] Do you mean me?

CAPTAIN JINKS. Don't turn, please, till I tell you.

[*The* POLICEMAN *comes slowly along.*

THE SAILOR. [*On the gang-plank.*] Don't you want me to get the Inspector for yer; yer things is all out?

AURELIA. Oh, yes, please do. I do want to get away!

THE POLICEMAN. All right, Jack, I'm passin'; I'll send him along.

THE SAILOR. Thank'y.

[*Exits on boat.* POLICEMAN *walks on.*

PETER. [*Who has been told by* CAPTAIN JINKS *he may have the monkey for his own, if he will take it away, jumps up with a wild howl of delight.*] Hi-yi! to keep?

CAPTAIN JINKS. Shh! Yes. [*Whispering.*] Hurry now, and quiet.

[*Motioning him off with the cage; the* NEWSBOY *seizes it.*

AURELIA. May I turn now?

CAPTAIN JINKS. In two minutes.

[*The* NEWSBOY, *rushing past the* POLICEMAN *with the cage, is at this moment nabbed by him.*

THE POLICEMAN. Here! Where are you going with that animal?

CAPTAIN JINKS. That's all right — it's my affair — have a drink?

[*Gives him a quarter. The* NEWSBOY *passes out with monkey.*

THE POLICEMAN. Thank ye, sir; you're a gentleman, sir. [*Goes.*

CAPTAIN JINKS. [*To* AURELIA.] Now! The monkey's gone, and you saw nothing, know nothing, — so, you see, you can't be blamed. Mapleson can complain in the papers and have the docks better policed.

AURELIA. Really, you've made yourself my friend for life!

CAPTAIN JINKS. I hope to be permitted to take the monkey's place, so far as being often in your company is concerned.

AURELIA. Don't you think you young men were rather impertinent, however?

CAPTAIN JINKS. Yes, now I've met you, I think we were. Still, I hope you'll forgive us.

AURELIA. Oh, I will, — *you!*

CAPTAIN JINKS. And I hope I'll deserve that. Please, isn't there anything I could do for you? I don't suppose you know many people here.

AURELIA. Not a soul.

CAPTAIN JINKS. And you must go about — there's lots to see. Please let me take you! I'm more or less of an idiot, I know, but so are most men — [*Interrupted.*

AURELIA. Yes, it's not much of a distinction.

CAPTAIN JINKS. I was going to add, — so far as *women* are concerned!

AURELIA. Oh! I beg your pardon.

CAPTAIN JINKS. Really, joking aside, I ask you — mayn't I call upon you at your hotel?

AURELIA. I'll think it over.

CAPTAIN JINKS. To-day?

AURELIA. No, I shall spend to-day with my dear foster-father. You know Professor Belliarti? He came over a month ago to drill the ballet. The first time we've been separated since I was three years old! [*She has forgotten herself, and is speaking with real feeling.*] He's the sweetest, dearest, most unselfish old creature, who has given me everything I have in the world — [*She stops short, suddenly realizing what she is saying.*] Oh, I beg your pardon for going on so!

CAPTAIN JINKS. [*Sympathetically.*] You needn't beg my pardon, for I can match your old gentleman with a dear little old lady living on a plantation far away down in Virginia, who's done her very *darndest* for me.

[*They look at each other a moment without speaking, with a mutual understanding of each other's nature.*

AURELIA. You *may* come and see me — to-morrow. [*She gives him her hand.*

CAPTAIN JINKS. [*Taking her hand.*] Thank you.

[MRS. STONINGTON *and* MISS MERRIAM *come timidly from the street. They are of middle age, and dressed a trifle out of date.* MISS MERRIAM, *who is of a decidedly shrinking nature, is attired in a vivid shade of "bottle green," heavily laid upon black. A quantity of green fringe, however, hints at her heart being still young and her spirits capable of gaiety, a fact also abetted by a spotted net over her "waterfall."* MRS. STONINGTON, *more dominant, and evidently the spokeswoman, favors a strict magenta in her ap-*

parel. Both are simple, good-hearted, kindly-intentioned, but misguided ladies, the Vice-President and Secretary of the Anti-French Literature League; they act quite without malice. MISS MERRIAM *is deaf and dumb.*

MRS. STONINGTON. I beg pardon; can you tell me where to find Madame Trentoni?

AURELIA. *I* am Madame Trentoni.

MRS. STONINGTON. Oh, really! [*She turns, and with her fingers tells* MISS MERRIAM *that this is* MADAME TRENTONI. *She then introduces her companion.*] This is Miss Merriam, the Corresponding Secretary.

[MISS MERRIAM *bows smilingly.*

AURELIA. How do you do?

MRS. STONINGTON. And *I* am Mrs. Stonington, the Vice-President of the Anti-French Literature League.

AURELIA. How do you do? [*Aside to* CAPTAIN JINKS.] I thought they had come to apply for places in the ballet!

[*While* AURELIA *is speaking to* CAPTAIN JINKS, MISS MERRIAM *has talked on her fingers to* MRS. STONINGTON. AURELIA *turns, before she finishes, and shows her surprise at* MISS MERRIAM'S *behavior.*

MRS. STONINGTON. My friend says to tell you at once that she is deaf and dumb, but she will be able to understand perfectly what you say from the motion of your lips.

AURELIA. [*Rather satirically.*] How interesting!

MRS. STONINGTON. I presume you have not had much experience in singing to deaf and dumb people — what I mean to say is, that you don't understand the language.

AURELIA. Not at all. Will you sit down?

[*Motioning to some trunks.* MRS. STONINGTON *and* MISS MERRIAM *sit.*

MRS. STONINGTON. Thank you. [*She looks up at* CAPTAIN JINKS.] Signor Trentoni, I presume?

[CAPTAIN JINKS *bows in elaborate acquiescence.*

AURELIA. [*Laughing in spite of herself.*] No, no! How dare you! This is — *a friend* of mine who has kindly come to welcome me.

CAPTAIN JINKS. Mr. Jinks.

[*Bowing. The two ladies bow back.*

MRS. STONINGTON. [*To* CAPTAIN JINKS.] Do sit. [*He does so on another trunk. He and* AURELIA *are much amused.* MISS MERRIAM *nods her head, and smiles acquiescence during all of* MRS. STONINGTON'S *speeches.*] We read in the papers this morning, you had arrived sooner than expected, and we decided to come right down and take the bull by the horns.

AURELIA. Meaning *me*, I presume?

[*Trying hard not to laugh.*

MRS. STONINGTON. Er — yes —

[*She is interrupted by* MISS MERRIAM, *who tugs at her arm and makes a few rapid movements with her fingers.*

MRS. STONINGTON. Yes, dear, and just like you! [*To* AURELIA.] She's so sensitive! She thinks it would be politer to say take the cow by the horns.

AURELIA. What can I do for you?

MRS. STONINGTON. It is stated in the papers that you intend to make your debutt in a piece called "Traviatter," which I am given to understand by a number of the members of our League, who have read the book, is the French drammer, "La Dame aux Camelias."

AURELIA. The papers and the League members are quite right.

MRS. STONINGTON. I am told the heroine is a — young person — no better than she should be, — in fact not so good!

[MISS MERRIAM *tugs violently at* MRS. STONINGTON'S *arm, and makes a few rapid passes with her fingers.*

MRS. STONINGTON. Of course! I never thought. [*To* AURELIA.] Excuse me, but would your gentleman friend be so kind as to walk to the other end of the dock for a few minutes?

AURELIA. Certainly. My friend is a very gallant man, Mrs. Vice-President; I am sure he would jump off the dock, if a lady asked him.

CAPTAIN JINKS. Not by a long shot!

MRS. STONINGTON. [*Seriously.*] But I shouldn't think of asking such a thing; he might get drowned.

CAPTAIN JINKS. [*Rising.*] Shall I go?

AURELIA. Yes, please, just for a second or two.

[CAPTAIN JINKS *withdraws outside, by the boat.*

MRS. STONINGTON. Our mission is a very delicate one.

AURELIA. I think I should call it indelicate —

MRS. STONINGTON. Oh, no! we want to ask you to make your debutt in some other opera. And we have here a petition to that effect, signed by over six hundred women and school children of Harlem, Brooklyn, and Jersey City — oh, yes, and Williamsburg.

[*Handing the paper to* AURELIA.

AURELIA. Thank you so much! What a splendid advertisement!

MRS. STONINGTON. We heard your voice was *most* beautiful, and a *great* many of us want to hear you, who couldn't go to *that* opera.

AURELIA. But do you know, when you come right down to the stories of the opera, I don't think there's much choice between them.

MRS. STONINGTON. Oh, dear me, yes!

[MISS MERRIAM *nods her head quietly, but firmly, and with a sweet smile.*

AURELIA. Well, what one would you propose?

MRS. STONINGTON. [*Triumphantly.*] *"Faust!"*

[MISS MERRIAM *looks transported as she recalls the angels of the final scene.*

AURELIA. Oh, but that isn't a goody-goody story by any means!

MRS. STONINGTON. My dear! It's a *sweet* opera! I remember the beautiful tableau, like the death of little Eva, at the end.

AURELIA. I suppose you didn't notice that Mephistopheles seems to have got Marguerite

after all; for the angels always take up quite a different young lady — and seem perfectly unconscious of their mistake.

MRS. STONINGTON. Never mind, the story is so pure.

AURELIA. But do you know what happens between the second and third acts?

MRS. STONINGTON. On the stage?

AURELIA. Oh, dear, no! In the story!

MRS. STONINGTON. Faust and Marguerite get married.

AURELIA. No, they don't; that's the trouble.

MRS. STONINGTON. [*Staggered.*] *What!!!*

AURELIA. They *didn't!*

MRS. STONINGTON. Bless my soul!

[*She rises aghast.* MISS MERRIAM *pulls* MRS. STONINGTON'S *arm, and makes a few rapid signs.*

MRS. STONINGTON. [*To* MISS MERRIAM.] *I should say so!* [*Kisses her gratefully. To* AURELIA.] She says she's glad we asked that young man to go away.

[MISS MERRIAM *again pulls* MRS. STONINGTON'S *elbow, and motions.*

MRS. STONINGTON. You dear thing, how like you! [*To* AURELIA.] She wants to know why you don't make your debutt in Oratorier. Come along now, do! [MISS MERRIAM *tugs again at* MRS. STONINGTON'S *arm, and makes a few more finger movements.*] Yes! [*To* AURELIA.] The women of America ask you to sing in Oratorier!

[CAPTAIN JINKS *is heard whistling "Champagne Charlie is My Name."*

AURELIA. [*Who can hardly restrain her laughter.*] I'll tell you what I'll do, — I'm willing, if you can persuade my manager; you see,

really, these things are entirely in the hands of Mr. Mapleson.

MRS. STONINGTON. We'll see him at once.

[MISS MERRIAM *tugs* MRS. STONINGTON'S *elbow, and motions.*

MRS. STONINGTON. Quite so! [*To* AURELIA.] She says men are so *easy*, we shall consider it settled!

CAPTAIN JINKS. [*Stops whistling, to call.*] I'm whistling so as not to hear. Must I take another trip?

AURELIA. No, come in!

[CAPTAIN JINKS *returns.*

AURELIA. [*To* MRS. STONINGTON.] Mr. Mapleson arrives this afternoon from Boston, and will stop at the New York Hotel.

MRS. STONINGTON. Thank you. If you should need some extra ladies in the chorus for

the Oratorier, I would come, — I know most of them, having belonged to the Oratorier Society for many years. We wear white dresses with blue sashes across the left shoulder, which makes a very pretty effect. [MISS MERRIAM *tugs* MRS. STONINGTON'S *arm, and makes a few motions.* MRS. STONINGTON *nods her head and turns to* AURELIA.] And Miss Merriam always goes with me; she fills up, and makes the chorus look bigger.

AURELIA. All of that, of course, will be left with Mr. Mapleson.

CAPTAIN JINKS. [*With difficulty restraining his laughter.*] Do they have men singers in an Oratorio?

MRS. STONINGTON. Oh, dear me, yes, we have some very handsome gentlemen singers in the club!

CAPTAIN JINKS. I wish you'd just mention me to Mr. Mapleson as a candidate.

MRS. STONINGTON. [*Smiling apologetically.*] I'm afraid I couldn't do that. Don't you think it would look rather bold,—my suggesting a young man and a perfect stranger? [MISS MERRIAM *tugs* MRS. STONINGTON'S *elbow, and makes a few motions.*] Yes. [*To* AURELIA.] We won't keep you any longer; we're very much obliged to you, I'm sure, and the League will signify their gratefulness by giving you an afternoon reception in the rooms of the Young Men's Christian Association. Good-by.

[*Bows.*

[MISS MERRIAM *also smiles and bows.*

AURELIA. [*Also bowing.*] Good-by.

[MRS. STONINGTON *takes* MISS MERRIAM'S *arm, and they turn their backs to* AURELIA

a second to consult. MRS. STONINGTON *motions a moment.* MISS MERRIAM *nods her head delightedly. They both turn and go to* AURELIA *with outstretched hands, very pleased with themselves for the gracious thing they think they are doing.*

MRS. STONINGTON. Good-by.

[*She and* AURELIA *shake hands;* AURELIA *says good-by. Then* MISS MERRIAM *and* AURELIA *shake hands, and* AURELIA *again says good-by.*

MRS. STONINGTON. [*To explain and excuse their cordiality.*] She says we don't consider *singers actresses.*

AURELIA. Very few are!

[MRS. STONINGTON *and* MISS MERRIAM *leave the dock in a manner of pleased satisfaction.*

AURELIA. [*Laughingly, to* CAPTAIN JINKS.]

What do you think Mapleson will do with them?

CAPTAIN JINKS. [*Laughing.*] "Men are so easy!"

AURELIA. Ah, but she, poor thing, was deaf and dumb! the only kind of woman who ever would have said that!

CAPTAIN JINKS. I should hate a silent woman in a house. It would be like a bird who couldn't sing, a rose that had no scent, a baby that couldn't cry, a piano never played upon.

AURELIA. Oh, I don't suppose there ever was a piano that didn't, at least once, do its worst with Rubenstein's Melody in F! Is this the Inspector!

[*As the* PRIVATE DETECTIVE *enters with the* POLICEMAN. *The* DETECTIVE *has a folded paper in his hand.*

CAPTAIN JINKS. I reckon he is.

[*The* DETECTIVE *and* POLICEMAN *pass among the trunks, counting them.*

AURELIA. I'm so nervous about the Customs; I wish the whole thing were over. We hear such awful tales at home about them. I haven't a thing dutiable, of course, not a thing! I've only forty-eight boxes, anyway, and they contain only my few personal effects!

CAPTAIN JINKS. I'll see what I can do with him to make him as lenient as possible.

THE DETECTIVE. [*Aside to the* POLICEMAN.] Keep in hearing-distance of my whistle — if they're going to try any bribing tricks, it'll be soon, now. [*The* POLICEMAN *passes on, and the* DETECTIVE *approaches* AURELIA.] Madam Trentoni?

AURELIA. Yes, sir. I hope you're not going

to disturb everything; the boxes were so *beautifully* packed!

THE DETECTIVE. I must do my duty, Madam.

CAPTAIN JINKS. We expect you to do that, officer, only, don't exaggerate it!

THE DETECTIVE. Your husband, Madam?

CAPTAIN JINKS. That's not your business!

AURELIA. [*To* CAPTAIN JINKS.] Oh, don't make him angry! [*To the* DETECTIVE, *very sweetly, but with some nervousness.*] It's a friend who came down to meet me. I had a splendid crossing! Do you like ocean travelling?

THE DETECTIVE. Never tried it. Would you prefer a woman examiner, ma'am?

AURELIA. Oh, no, I think I'd rather have a man! Unless, of course, you're going to be personal! If you're going to look for violins in the flounces of my petticoats, and diamonds in

my bustle, I'd rather have a *lady* — a *perfect* lady!

THE DETECTIVE. [*Looking at her.*] I don't consider there'll be any need for that.

AURELIA. There! I knew the minute I saw you, you were going to be sweet and nice and obliging, and I'm going to be equally so, and help you all I can.

[CHARLIE *and* GUSSIE *return from their walk with the two dogs, followed by* MRS. GREENBOROUGH, *who is talking, although a little breathless from having been evidently hurried in her walk. She is interrupted by* AURELIA.

MRS. GREENBOROUGH. My word, though, gentlemen, you do walk fast; it's more —

AURELIA. Come along, Mrs. Gee; we want the keys.

MRS. GREENBOROUGH. [*Joining her by the trunks.*] Has the — [*Interrupted.*

AURELIA. Yes, this is the Inspector.

MRS. GREENBOROUGH. [*Excitedly.*] How do you do, sir! We haven't a thing, not a single, solitary —

[*Interrupted.*

AURELIA. I've told him, Mrs. Gee. [*To the* DETECTIVE.] By the bye, you will find a box of new-looking curls, and a couple of waterfalls, but they've been worn heaps of times — *by me*, I mean, as well as by the lady who grew 'em!

MRS. GREENBOROUGH. [*To* CAPTAIN JINKS.] Would you hold Camille?

AURELIA. [*Smiling to* CAPTAIN JINKS *as he takes the dog.*] You see, you are to have your chance after all!

[AURELIA *and the* DETECTIVE *begin unlocking and arranging the trunks. The* DETECTIVE *shows that he is very suspicious of* AURELIA *and of* CAPTAIN JINKS. CAPTAIN JINKS

joins CHARLIE *and* GUSSIE *at one side, while* MRS. GREENBOROUGH *opens the trunks.*

CHARLIE. Well?

CAPTAIN JINKS. Well, what?

CHARLIE. How did you get on?

CAPTAIN JINKS. How do you mean?

CHARLIE. Why, with Trentoni! You've had a tremendous advantage over us!

CAPTAIN JINKS. Oh! Oh, yes, our bet! That's off; she's too good for that sort of thing.

CHARLIE. No you don't! Look here, our bet holds good — a thousand dollars to me, if I win, and another thousand if *you don't.*

CAPTAIN JINKS. Nothing of the sort; both bets are off — they were only a joke, and a poor one!

CHARLIE. Here, no sneaking, — a bet's a bet!

CAPTAIN JINKS. Not when it's an insult to a

lady! And I won't permit any action in regard to Madame Trentoni, unworthy of the highest woman in the land.

CHARLIE. Who appointed you her protector? You've bet me one thousand dollars you'd make love to her.

CAPTAIN JINKS. Wait! [*Gives the dog, Camille, to* GUSSIE.] I haven't quite a thousand with me, but — [*takes card and writes*] "I O U $1000 for bet in reference to Madame Trentoni." There you are; you understand? There's no bet about anybody's making love to the lady! *The bet is off!*

AURELIA. Captain Jinks! Will you please help us a moment?

GUSSIE. Here! [*Offering back the dog.*

CAPTAIN JINKS. No, *you* keep *Camille!* [*He joins* AURELIA.

GUSSIE. [*To* CHARLIE.] Are you going to let him off?

CHARLIE. No, indeed! He's got to stand by his bet with me, and I intend to win. You must help me, Gussie!

GUSSIE. How, old fellow?

CHARLIE. I've been pumping the old lady on our walk, and she's even a bigger prize than I thought. She's rich as Crœsus, and gets a salary for singing that would knock *you* off your feet, Gussie.

GUSSIE. Really! Dear me!

CHARLIE. Yes — Jinks doesn't know, and don't tell him. I'm not only going to win my bet with him, — I'm going to *marry her!*

GUSSIE. By Jove! You *are* going it, aren't you?

CHARLIE. You help me, and when I've married the lady, I'll pay you all I owe you.

GUSSIE. Thanks, old fellow. But suppose Captain Jinks —

CHARLIE. He'd never *marry* her; he belongs to two of the most stuck-up families, North or South, in the country! But if he tries to interfere with me in any way, we'll cook his goose for him, all the same.

GUSSIE. How? He's such an attractive dog! Don't you think so?

CHARLIE. If he gets on the inside track, I'll show him up to her — say he made a bet with us to marry her on account of her money, and show his I O U for proof.

GUSSIE. But he *didn't* bet that.

CHARLIE. What's the odds! You're no Georgie Washington! and you must back me up, or lose every cent I owe you!

GUSSIE. I suppose I mustn't let myself make

a deep impression on her, for fear of interfering with *you*.

CHARLIE. [*Amused.*] Oh, you can try your luck! Come along, now. [*They join the others.*] Can we be of any assistance?

AURELIA. Oh, you are — a very great deal, with the dogs! I'm really awfully obliged to you. Come along, I'll walk with you to the end of the dock — it's stopped raining, hasn't it?

[*She turns to go with the two men. The* DETECTIVE *has just begun to pitch out the contents of a trunk, rather roughly, on to the floor.* MRS. GREENBOROUGH *screams, which stops* AURELIA.

MRS. GREENBOROUGH. Oh! Aurelia! Look what he's doing!

CAPTAIN JINKS. Say, old man, is that neces-

sary? Go on, hurry up, get through, and come out and have a drink with me.

THE DETECTIVE. [*Looking at* CAPTAIN JINKS *very suspiciously.*] No, thank you.

AURELIA. If you ruin my clothes, I shall sue the city — I warn you of that! Do you take me for an Irish dressmaker, with a French name, smuggling in her winter models? My dear man, go on! Play hide-and-seek in every box, if you like! Climb down all the corners, use my hats for tenpins, empty out the shoes, scatter my lingerie to the winds! *Jump* on every stitch I own! And then they call this a *free* country!! Captain Jinks, I leave, not my honor, but something much more fragile, — I leave my *wardrobe* in your hands! Now, gentlemen.

[*And turning, she goes out with* CHARLIE *and* GUSSIE.

MRS. GREENBOROUGH. You old ogre, you!

THE DETECTIVE. I don't take no interest in woman's clothes — I'm just doing my duty.

[*He throws open a hat-box, with three hats in it, and then begins to empty another trunk.* MRS. GREENBOROUGH *is busy, trying to repack after him.*

MRS. GREENBOROUGH. My word! It's a cruel shame! One would think you expected passengers to swim across the Atlantic, like that Lady Godiva, without a stitch on their backs! Another thing, I'm sure it's a great pity, seeing that you're going to display Madame Trentoni's entire wardrobe, we didn't ask those nice young men, who gave me a booky, to stay and take notes for their papers. [*The* DETECTIVE *goes to a certain trunk.* MRS. GREENBOROUGH *sees him and rises, crying out:*] No! No! You mustn't open that; I really do object now!

THE DETECTIVE. [*Very suspicious.*] Oh, you especially object now! [*His hand is on the lid.*] Kindly give me the key!

MRS. GREENBOROUGH. [*Sits on the trunk.*] I won't! I appeal to your delicacy as a — as a — *gentleman!* That contains her — her — linen garments and Valenciennes lace.

THE DETECTIVE. [*Still suspicious.*] Sounds very pretty — I must trouble you for the key.

MRS. GREENBOROUGH. [*Gives it to him.*] Toad! [*The* DETECTIVE *unlocks and opens the trunk.* PROFESSOR BELLIARTI *and* MARY, AURELIA'S *maid, enter from the street.*] Oh, Professor Belliarti, I'm so pleased you've come back! This dreadful man is making such an *exposé* of all Aurelia's clothes.

[*The* POLICEMAN *strolls in again.*

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. That can't be helped, my dear Mrs. Greenborough. Where is Aurelia?

AURELIA. [*Speaking most joyfully from the outside.*] I hear a voice! I hear a voice I *love!*

[*She rushes in, and across the stage, into* BELLIARTI'S *arms, throwing her own about his neck.*

[MARY *has gone to the trunks, and is putting them in order. She is joined by the* POLICEMAN, *who helps her lock one of the trunks, the keys being in all the locks. When this is done, they stand on one side and talk, both enjoying themselves very much.* MARY *is pretty, and the* POLICEMAN *is appreciative. The* DETECTIVE *is searching through the trunks.*

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. [*With a voice broken with happy emotion, and holding* AURELIA *close in his arms.*] God bless my little girl, God bless my little Taglioni! Glad to see her old crow of a

father, eh? Bless your pretty eyes, my Fanny Elssler, my little singing bird!

AURELIA. Oh, Papa Belliarti! Oh, Papa Belliarti! Oh! Oh! Oh! [*Gives him three big hugs.*] I *am* so glad to see you! [*Half crying, half laughing with joy.*] It was awful disembarking here without a soul to meet me — a soul I loved; for it's home I've come to, after all, isn't it? You've always taught me this *was home!* [*Then, with a little change of manner:*] I did my best, but I'm afraid I've made dreadful mistakes already, and said the wrong things! But I don't care, now I've got you! [*Choking up again.*] I tried to be gay, but to tell the truth I'm so homesick, and all I want is to have a good cry *here* in your arms! [*Breaking down.*

[CAPTAIN JINKS *stands, watching the* DETECTIVE *closely. The* DETECTIVE *notices this.* CAP-

TAIN JINKS *gets out his purse, deliberately chooses a few bills, and doubles them up, doing it so the* DETECTIVE *will see. The* DETECTIVE *does see. Only the* POLICEMAN *is blind, because he has* MARY *in his eyes.*

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. That'll be all right, now — we have beautiful rooms for you, and they are full of flowers that have been sent, and the rain is over.

AURELIA. And so is mine. [*Wiping her eyes.*] There! See, the sun's out! [*Smiling up at him, holding his hand, and linking their arms together.*] It really is you! And you are well? Tell me you are well! Of course you are, and as fat as ever! [BELLIARTI *being slender as a reed.*] You dear old darling, you! Come, let me introduce to you these gentlemen who have very courteously come to welcome me. Gentle-

men, I want to present to you my best friend and foster-father, Professor Belliarti — a *great artist* in dancing, I can tell you that, too!

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. [*With a quaint, old-fashioned bow.*] Gentlemen!

CAPTAIN JINKS. Honored, sir.

CHARLIE. [*At the same time, bowing.*] Very pleased.

GUSSIE. Delighted.

AURELIA. [*To* BELLIARTI.] And now, I want you to see my cabin, — how nice it was. Come along into the boat!

[*She leads him toward the gang-plank. She sees* MARY *and the* POLICEMAN. AURELIA *exchanges an amused glance with* BELLIARTI.

AURELIA. Mary! [MARY *doesn't hear.*] Mary!!

MARY. Yes, Madame? [*She blushes.*

[*The* POLICEMAN *slides out the big door, suddenly.*

AURELIA. I only want to remind you, Mary, you are not in London! And let me warn you — as a *friend*, Mary — that the policemen here are *not English!*

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. No, they are *Irish*, Mary, so look out for Blarney!

AURELIA. And incidentally, Mary, you had better go on with the packing.

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. [*To the* DETECTIVE.] You don't need to keep Madame Trentoni, if the maid stays?

THE DETECTIVE. No, sir.

AURELIA. Delightful! Then we can go at once! Come and see my cabin, first.

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. Will one of you gentlemen kindly call a hack?

CAPTAIN JINKS, CHARLIE, and GUSSIE. Oh!

Please take my *landau! My landau's* at your disposal.

AURELIA. [*Laughing on the gang-plank.*] But I can't go in the landau of all three!

CAPTAIN JINKS. Oh, yes, you can, — it's the *same* landau!

AURELIA. Then I accept with pleasure.

[BELLIARTI *disappears on the ship.*

CHARLIE. I'll tell the driver to back in.

[*Goes out to the street.*

[GUSSIE *helps* MRS. GREENBOROUGH *with a trunk-strap.*

AURELIA. [*On the gang-plank.*] Oh, Captain Jinks.

CAPTAIN JINKS. [*Going up to her.*] Yes?

AURELIA. Not to-morrow!

CAPTAIN JINKS. [*Tremendously disappointed.*] No?

AURELIA. No! This afternoon at four!

[*Gives him her hand, which he kisses. She also goes on board and out of sight.*

CAPTAIN JINKS. This afternoon at four! [*After dreaming a moment, he pulls himself together and beckons to the* DETECTIVE.] One minute! [*Motioning him to one side. The* DETECTIVE *goes, expecting what is going to happen.*] Look here, now, it's all right — the lady's all right, and you and I are all right. We understand each other, don't we?

THE DETECTIVE. I rather think we do, sir!

[CHARLIE *returns.*

CAPTAIN JINKS. Good! Rush her things through now, and don't bother her any more!

[*Giving him the bills.*

THE DETECTIVE. Thank you. [*Taking them. He blows his whistle twice, as agreed on. The*

POLICEMAN *quickly enters.*] Officer, I give this man in charge for bribing a United States official.

[*General consternation.*

CAPTAIN JINKS. [*Dumfounded.*] But —

THE POLICEMAN. [*Linking his arm in that of* CAPTAIN JINKS.] Come along! Don't make no trouble now! Come along quietly!

[*The* POLICEMAN *exits with* CAPTAIN JINKS. GUSSIE *and* CHARLIE *are delighted. The* MAID *is surprised. The* DETECTIVE *is satisfied.*

AURELIA. [*Coming back from the boat.*] Wasn't it charming, really? And just think, only thirteen days crossing!

[BELLIARTI *follows her.*

CHARLIE. The landau's ready!

[*A large landau backs on from the street.*

AURELIA. Oh, a superb turnout! Come

along, Mrs. Gee! [*She gets in with* MRS. GREENBOROUGH *and* BELLIARTI, *the two men helping them, and all talking at once. The bouquets are put in, too.*] Really, gentlemen, you've been superbly kind! Really, I shan't forget it—you know, you're very attractive!

GUSSIE. Which one of us is most so?

AURELIA. [*Leaning out and over the side of the carriage.*] Impossible to say, you're all so perfectly charming! But where is Captain Jinks?

CHARLIE. Oh, he was called away suddenly, *by most important business!*

AURELIA. Tell him not to forget this afternoon at four!

CHARLIE. This afternoon at four.

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. [*To the driver.*] The Brevoort House.

[*The landau starts off.*

AURELIA. Good-by, good-by!

ALL. Good-by! good-by!

[MRS. GREENBOROUGH *throws back a bouquet, which* CHARLIE *catches, and, as the landau passes out of sight, with laughter and good-bys, the curtain falls.*

END OF ACT I

THE SECOND ACT

A FORTNIGHT LATER. — MADAME TRENTONI'S *private parlor in the Brevoort House; a large room with double folding-doors at the back, which lead into another and larger room. There are two windows on the Left, and a door and mantel on the Right. The walls are tinted a light, cold, ugly violet, with a deep crimson velvet paper border. The furniture is gilt, and upholstered with crimson satin and heavy red rope worsted fringe. It is comfortable and warm, — especially in the Summer! — and is not plain, but hideous. At the windows are lace curtains, with heavy satin lambrequins. There is a piano, open, by the windows, in one of which is a very*

small basket, with a very large handle, full of roses. There is a marble-topped centre-table, bearing a Bible, a Guide to the city, and a silver-plated card-receiver. An oval-framed steel engraving, called "Autumn" (a young lady most inappropriately dressed for that season of the year, with curvature of the spine, and balancing a prize bunch of grapes on the top of her bare shoulder), hangs on one wall; and, on another, its companion picture, called "Spring" (another young lady, only this one evidently a blonde, also sure of the weather and her health, dressed in a veil and a large bunch of buttercups). On the mantel are some dreadful vases, with nice little bouquets in them, and several photographs and some cards. The stage is empty. The hall door, at the back, near the double doors, opens, and a hotel SERVANT *shows in* CHARLES LA MARTINE

and AUGUSTUS VAN VORKENBURG. *The* SERVANT *carries a small silver tray.*

SERVANT. What names shall I say to Madame Trentoni, gentlemen?

CHARLIE. Simply say two gentlemen.

[*He whistles "Champagne Charlie," saunters to a window, and, pulling aside the lace curtains, looks out, as the* SERVANT *exits.*

GUSSIE. She's *in*, of course! I know that.

CHARLIE. Yes, so do I, but I'll bet you she won't receive us; she'll send word she's out!

GUSSIE. [*Sitting on the sofa, and tracing the cabbage roses on the carpet with his cane.*] I don't see how she dares, again. You don't see Captain Jinks coming up the Avenue, do you?

CHARLIE. No.

GUSSIE. Oh, but he isn't likely to *miss* a day!

CHARLIE. You're sure it's been every day?

GUSSIE. Yes, or oftener!

CHARLIE. [*Sits on the piano-stool, and spins himself around.*] And they're seen constantly everywhere together. Last night it was at Niblo's Garden to see "The Black Crook"! And they're nearly every day at Maillard's or Delmonico's!

GUSSIE. Well, that'll have to let up a bit after to-night, when she's begun singing.

CHARLIE. You bet. There's not a seat to be had for love or money! They say there's not been such excitement in New York over a *début* since Jenny Lind.

GUSSIE. Has she been "at home" one single time *you've* called?

CHARLIE. Not one. And you?

GUSSIE. No.

CHARLIE. That's all right! Well, it'll end

now, if she sees us to-day. Don't you fail to back me up in everything!

GUSSIE. I'll do my best. Only, just as I've learned one lie, you change it; it's very confusing.

[*The* SERVANT *re-enters.*

CHARLIE. *Sh!!*

SERVANT. Madame Trentoni cannot say whether she is in or not, unless you send up your cards.

[*They give the* SERVANT *their cards, and he again exits.*

GUSSIE. [*Examining the photographs on the mantel.*] Who bailed Jinks out of jail that day she landed?

CHARLIE. Mapleson.

GUSSIE. Why did *he?*

CHARLIE. Oh, he always liked Captain Jinks! He likes all us good-looking fellows who make

things hum at the Academy. *He* was a bully clever chap, that Customs Detective!

GUSSIE. [*Looking through the cards in the card-receiver.*] When does Jinks' case come up in Court?

CHARLIE. To-day.

GUSSIE. To-day?

CHARLIE. Yes, this afternoon.

GUSSIE. What time?

CHARLIE. Two o'clock.

GUSSIE. Two o'clock. Good! It'll ruin his chance with Trentoni.

CHARLIE. Don't be an ass! Didn't he get into the scrape to save her inconvenience! It will make a hero of him in her eyes.

GUSSIE. [*Whistles.*] I didn't think of that! Probably he has told her all about it already.

CHARLIE. Go West, Fitznoodle! He's too

damned modest. Besides, he's clever enough to see that, if he told her about it, it would sound infernally like brag, and spoil the effect. By the way, you'll have to lend me another hundred.

GUSSIE. By Jove! — that makes a good deal, you know.

CHARLIE. Yes, but I must keep up appearances to catch Trentoni. So you must fork over *more* if you want to get the *rest* back.

GUSSIE. What do you want this hundred for?

CHARLIE. For a new Prince Albert and a swallow-tail suit. Look here; if she sees us now, this is what I am going to say to her.

GUSSIE. What?

CHARLIE. That Jinks bet us he would marry her, and would pay his bet out of *her* money.

GUSSIE. But he can deny that.

CHARLIE. Let him, we're two to one!

GUSSIE. But still —

CHARLIE. [*Interrupting.*] He made *a* bet, didn't he? He'll acknowledge that — I never heard him lie in his life. Besides, I have his I O U to prove it. And I intend to arrange things so that he won't know really what he's owning up to. *Sh!*

[*The* SERVANT *re-enters.*

SERVANT. Madame Trentoni regrets she is out!

[*He places their two cards on top of the card-receiver. There is a knock on the hall door. The* SERVANT *goes to open it.*

CHARLIE. Jinks, I'll bet you!

[*The* SERVANT *opens the door, and* CAPTAIN JINKS *enters.*

CAPTAIN JINKS. Madame Trentoni? [*Sees the*

other two men; he is not pleased, and bows coolly to them.] How are you!

CHARLIE. Madame Trentoni is *out;* we've just sent up our cards.

CAPTAIN JINKS. [*Giving one of his cards to the* SERVANT.] Oh, well, perhaps you didn't have *trumps!* Try this one!

SERVANT. Yes, sir.

[*He goes out.*

CHARLIE. Well, have you worked it up — your flirtation?

CAPTAIN JINKS. [*Very quietly.*] No.

CHARLIE. Then what are you doing here?

CAPTAIN JINKS. [*Firmly.*] That's my affair.

CHARLIE. If you think you are going to marry this lady —

CAPTAIN JINKS. [*Still quietly, but with tension.*] That's *her* affair.

CHARLIE. I'll be damned if you do!

CAPTAIN JINKS. You will be if I *don't*, if it's thanks to *your* interference.

CHARLIE. Have you asked her yet?

CAPTAIN JINKS. Not often enough.

CHARLIE. Have you any reason to believe she will accept you?

CAPTAIN JINKS. None of your business.

CHARLIE. [*Getting angry, and speaking louder.*] Yes, it is, — the business of all three of us!

CAPTAIN JINKS. [*Also getting angry, and less contained.*] Look here, don't you dare mention that damned *wager!*

CHARLIE. You made it!

CAPTAIN JINKS. I called it off! I lost, if you like, and you have my note. In a week it will be paid up. I know, when I made that bet, appearances were against me, but this

woman has taught me I'm not a fool, nor a blackguard, after all. As a fact, I haven't asked her to be my wife yet; but I've come to do so *now*, because *this morning* I got some work to do, an *honest job*, not very elegant — it wouldn't suit either of you — but it'll earn me a living, and, thank God, it puts me in a position to ask the woman I love to be my wife!

[*The* SERVANT *comes back.*

SERVANT. [*To* CAPTAIN JINKS.] Madame Trentoni will be down in a few minutes.

CAPTAIN JINKS. Thank you.

CHARLIE. Huh!

[CAPTAIN JINKS *goes to the piano and, with the forefinger of his right hand, picks out "I'm Captain Jinks of the Horse Marines," playing it with a sort of triumphant force.*

CHARLIE. [*To* GUSSIE.] Come along; we

might as well take our cards back. [*And, going to the card-receiver, they take their cards and put them back in their cases.*] We may have to economize! Oh! By Jove! I have one of my clever ideas.

[*The* SERVANT *goes to the hall door and, opening it, stands ready to show out* CHARLIE *and* GUSSIE.

CHARLIE. [*Stops to speak to the* SERVANT.] Is Professor Belliarti in the hotel?

SERVANT. No, sir; I expect he's at the Academy of Music.

CHARLIE. Good! He's our next move. [*To* GUSSIE, *linking his arm in his.*] We'll go there!

[*They go out.* CAPTAIN JINKS *looks over his shoulder and, seeing them go, changes to "Shoo Fly, don't bother me" on the piano; just as he finishes,* AURELIA *enters.*

AURELIA. [*Singing.*] "Shoo Fly, don't bother me!" — that's a civil greeting.

[*Laughing.*

CAPTAIN JINKS. That was for La Martine and Van Vorkenburg.

AURELIA. Oh! — do you know — I don't want to be rude, but I can't bear your friends!

CAPTAIN JINKS. Neither can I.

AURELIA. And, by the way, before I forget it, I hope you'll come to supper to-night — here. Will you? After the Opera.

CAPTAIN JINKS. Delighted!

AURELIA. No grand powwow! Only one or two distinguished people with the company, and Mapleson, and the Arditis. Oh, yes, and those two nice, funny creatures who wanted me to *début* in oratorio. They've been most kind to Mrs. Gee, and are to be at "Traviata"

to-night, after all! I'll let you sit between them!

CAPTAIN JINKS. [*Laughing.*] There's a prize for a good boy.

AURELIA. Won't you sit down?

[*Sitting on the piano-stool.*

CAPTAIN JINKS. Won't you take the chair? Let me sit on the piano-stool?

AURELIA. No, indeed, you don't wear a bustle. It's the only comfortable seat for me in the room! It was very kind of you to call, this noon. I hoped you would, but —

CAPTAIN JINKS. [*Pulling his chair nearer her.*] "But?" It was an appointment!

AURELIA. Oh, yes, but I can never be certain. You remember our very first appointment you deliberately *broke!*

[*Teasingly.*

CAPTAIN JINKS. You mean that day you landed?

AURELIA. You promised to come to the hotel at four o'clock.

CAPTAIN JINKS. Oh, yes, but you forgave me for that, long ago, when I told you I was *detained — in more senses than one!* And very unavoidably, not to mention unwillingly!

AURELIA. But you never told me why.

CAPTAIN JINKS. No, I couldn't, but I will *some* day. Are you nervous about to-night?

AURELIA. Frightfully!

CAPTAIN JINKS. You'll take the roof off the Academy!

AURELIA. *I hae me doots!* I'm not so sure I'm not an acquired taste, like olives and tomatoes and Russian caviare! But tell me one thing —

CAPTAIN JINKS. I'm going to, before I leave this room.

[*He changes his seat to a chair close beside the piano.*

AURELIA. Really! What?

CAPTAIN JINKS. No, let's have yours first. When I get started on mine, there won't be time for anything else.

AURELIA. Well, supposing — by some heaven-sent chance — I do succeed, even like in London; then, you know, after I've bowed thirty-two times, — with a heaving bosom, and thrown kisses, like fireworks to the gallery, twenty-three times, if they still keep on, — and oh, goodness, how I love them when they do! — then I sing something, just some little song. Now, I want to sing "Home, Sweet Home." Do you know it?

CAPTAIN JINKS. Oh, yes. Clara Louise Kellogg sings it on the same occasions.

AURELIA. With variations? I have trills and all sorts of monkey tricks!

CAPTAIN JINKS. So has she!

AURELIA. I was afraid so. Well, then, I think I'll sing a little song called "The Last Rose of Summer." [*She sings a bar or two.*] Have you heard it?

[*She sings the verse through.*

CAPTAIN JINKS. No.

AURELIA. It's quite new and unhackneyed, isn't it? I sing it in "Martha."

CAPTAIN JINKS. Not very lively though! Why not sing "Those Tassels on her Boots?"

AURELIA. [*Laughing.*] I don't know it; show me! [*Getting up from the piano-stool, she makes him sit down and sing.* CAPTAIN JINKS *sings*

one verse, accompanying himself with his fore-finger.] Entrancing! Only, I don't think the Anti-French Literature League would approve of the sentiment!

CAPTAIN JINKS. [*Turning on the stool, rises, and speaks seriously.*] There would be just *one* consolation to me if you didn't make a success at all!

AURELIA. You horrid brute! There would be *no* consolation for me.

CAPTAIN JINKS. That is *my* misfortune —

AURELIA. How do you mean?

CAPTAIN JINKS. It would make it so much easier for me to ask you to marry me!

[*A knock on the hall door.*

AURELIA. Well, then, let's *pretend* I've failed!

[PETER, *the newsboy, in the livery of a hotel servant, enters.*

CAPTAIN JINKS. Hello, Peter!

PETER. Hello, sir!

CAPTAIN JINKS. How do you like your new job?

PETER. Oh, it ain't bad — [*Aside to* CAPTAIN JINKS.] I does it for *her* sake, so as to be near *her*, but I find it very confining.

AURELIA. What is it, Peter?

PETER. Beg pardon, ma'am, the reporter from the Tribune wants to see you on a personal matter of great importance.

AURELIA. Say I'm out.

PETER. Yes, ma'am. [*Exits.*

AURELIA. What a horrid moment to be interrupted in. *Please* go on *just* where you left off!

CAPTAIN JINKS. You are very rich and popular and beautiful and all the rest of it —

[*He stops.*

AURELIA. [*Childishly happy and delighted.*] Oh, that isn't fair! — to hurry through with just "all the rest of it." I wonder you didn't say I was beautiful, *et cetera!* No, siree! You must enumerate, singly, every solitary nice thing you think I am!

CAPTAIN JINKS. It would take too long!

AURELIA. How long?

CAPTAIN JINKS. The rest of my life!

[*Starting to embrace her. Another knock on the hall door. They start apart, and sit on opposite sides of the table. Then* AURELIA *speaks.*

AURELIA. Come in.

[PETER *re-enters.*

PETER. Please, ma'am, the reporter from the Tribune told me to ask you, so long as you was dead set on being out, if the news was true

what has come to his office, that you was engaged to be married to *him!*

[*Pointing to* CAPTAIN JINKS.

AURELIA. [*On one side of the table.*] It won't be true if he keeps on interrupting with messages all the day! You tell the gentleman, Peter, that I've gone to the Academy.

CAPTAIN JINKS. [*On the other side of the table.*] And if he asks you anything about me, tell him you don't know who I am.

PETER. Oh, but I can't.

CAPTAIN JINKS. Why not?

PETER. 'Cause I've just told him you've been to see Madame Trentoni every day!

AURELIA. What did you do that for?

PETER. For a dollar!

CAPTAIN JINKS. That's a nice return to make to Madame Trentoni for getting you this good position in a high-toned hotel!

PETER. If you wanted me to lie about it, you ought ter have told me; I thought it was something she'd be proud of.

AURELIA. That's all right, Peter; go give my message, and don't answer any more questions about me at all.

PETER. Yes, ma'am.

[*Exits.*

AURELIA. Peter wasn't so wrong; I'm not ashamed of your visits.

CAPTAIN JINKS. [*Rises and goes to her.*] Look here, I'm not worth your little finger, but if you'll only overlook my beastly unworthiness, and just let my love for you count, I'll do my best, so long as I live, to make my wife the happiest woman in the world.

AURELIA. But I'm *nobody.*

CAPTAIN JINKS. The woman I love — *nobody?*

AURELIA. But your family — your mother —?

CAPTAIN JINKS. *You* are the woman I love.

AURELIA. Still, I mayn't be the woman your mother loves!

CAPTAIN JINKS. Oh, well, say! Are you marrying mother or *me?*

AURELIA. But won't your mother be shocked at your marrying a "lady on the stage"?

CAPTAIN JINKS. [*Half amused.*] Oh, very likely she'll carry on awful for a while! The Ladies' Anti-French Literature League is *broad-minded* compared to mother! But she's an angel, all the same; and, as birds of a feather flock together, she will soon chum up with *you* when she has once had a chance to know you.

AURELIA. I'm not so sure. She'll think you are going to perdition!

CAPTAIN JINKS. Oh, no, — to a much hotter place! But when she *knows you!*

AURELIA. You think so, because you think you are in love with me.

CAPTAIN JINKS. "Think!"

AURELIA. [*Rising.*] It would break my heart to come between you and your mother.

CAPTAIN JINKS. Now, don't be selfish; it will break mine if you refuse me, and you'd rather break your heart than mine, wouldn't you? [*Coming close to her.*

AURELIA. [*Teasing, and backing slowly away.*] Oh, I don't know.

CAPTAIN JINKS. [*Following her.*] Madame Trentoni! — Oh, can't I call you something else, something more friendly, more personal?

AURELIA. Yes, you may call me — Miss Johnson; that's my real name, you know!

CAPTAIN JINKS. But you have another, a nearer one —

AURELIA. Oh, well, go on with Miss Johnson for a few minutes.

CAPTAIN JINKS. [*Makes her let him take her hand.*] Listen to me seriously. This is a question for *you* and *me* to decide. Let's decide it now! Do you know that until I met you I was a lazy good-for-nothing loafer! Now, I'm afraid I'm not good for much, but I'm no longer lazy, and I'm a lover instead of a loafer! Let me work for you, will you? It's no fun working only for myself! Make my dreams come true, just to prove the rule that they don't.

AURELIA. There are dreams — and *dreams!* —

CAPTAIN JINKS. Yes, but mine are all alike, day-dreams, and all full of one idea, one desire, — your love. I can't express myself; I

don't know how to say it; but what I mean is that I don't want to go anywhere, on sea, on land, in the city, in the country, anywhere, unless *you* are there beside me. Life without you doesn't seem worth the trouble! Oh, if I only dared hope you could care a little for a chap like me!

AURELIA. [*Softening, and with bent head, looks at him sweetly from the corner of her eye.*] I give you permission to *dream* that!

CAPTAIN JINKS. Really?

AURELIA. Yes, and you can even make the "*little*" a *good deal!* —

CAPTAIN JINKS. You —

[*Interrupted. He is going to say "darling."*

AURELIA. Wait a minute! You know I'm not really half so nice as you think I am.

CAPTAIN JINKS. Aren't you?

AURELIA. No, but it won't make any difference, if you never find it out! Only, suppose I were to fail to-night —

CAPTAIN JINKS. Ah! That's just what I meant by having one consolation; you would know then, I loved you only for your dear self. And if you loved me, we could say, "Never mind, for *love* doesn't fail!"

AURELIA. [*With tears in her eyes.*] You *are* a darling —

[*A knock on the hall door. They change their places quickly.* CAPTAIN JINKS *sits again on one side of the centre-table, and* AURELIA *on the other. They exchange a smiling glance of understanding as* AURELIA *says "Come in."*

[PETER *enters.*

PETER. Ice-water! [*He rattles the ice in a*

white china pitcher, which he places between them on the centre-table. AURELIA *and* CAPTAIN JINKS *exchange hopeless glances.*] The chamber-maid wants to know if she can come in and do this room now?

AURELIA. No, she can't!

[*She goes to the writing-desk and writes in ink, with the wrong end of a pen, on a big sheet of fresh white blotting-paper there.*

CAPTAIN JINKS. [*Taking* PETER *to one side by the collar of his coat.*] Look here, if you bring any more messages, or ice-water, or reporters, or chambermaids, or any other damned thing to Madame Trentoni, this afternoon, I'll break your neck! Do you understand?

PETER. No, sir!

CAPTAIN JINKS. Well, think it over as you go downstairs.

PETER. What's it worth?

CAPTAIN JINKS. Your *neck*, that's all — go on, git!

PETER. Yes, sir. [*Half-way to the door, he stops.*] Say! I'll bet you a quarter, no one gets into this room what ain't wanted!

CAPTAIN JINKS. All right!

PETER. Thank you!

[*He exits, happy.* AURELIA *follows him to the door with the blotting-paper, which she holds in front of her, displaying it to* CAPTAIN JINKS.

AURELIA. There! How would it do if I put *this* on the door?

[*The paper reads in large black letters, "Engaged."*

CAPTAIN JINKS. It would be all right if you would add "to R. Jinks."

AURELIA. [*Laughing.*] How dare you! Certainly *not!*

CAPTAIN JINKS. Why?

AURELIA. Because — [*Closing the door, she turns and faces him.*] Because — [*She comes slowly to him.*] *Because it's the truth!*

CAPTAIN JINKS. [*Embracing her.*] You *love* me! [*In his arms, she doesn't answer.*] Do *you* love me? [*Still in his arms, she doesn't answer.*] You don't answer?

AURELIA. [*Looking up at him.*] Am I trying to get out of your arms?

CAPTAIN JINKS. Darling!

AURELIA. *Yours!*

[*She bursts into tears.*

CAPTAIN JINKS. [*Frightened.*] Dearest, what's the matter? You are crying!

AURELIA. I know it, I'm *so happy!*

[PROFESSOR BELLIARTI *comes in, unannounced. He brings with him his violin in a green baize bag.*

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. Bless my stars and ballet dancers! Ought I have knocked!

[AURELIA *and* CAPTAIN JINKS *have broken quickly from each other's arms.*

CAPTAIN JINKS. Oh, no, we're *accustomed* to interruptions this morning!

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. [*To* AURELIA.] Having a little rehearsal with a new tenor, my dear?

[*Placing the bag on the piano, and busy with his violin.*

AURELIA. [*Laughing.*] Yes, sort of like that!

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. The ladies of the ballet are here to rehearse, at your request, you know.

AURELIA. Oh, dear, that's true! I forgot. You'll have to excuse me, Captain Jinks.

CAPTAIN JINKS. [*Bows to* AURELIA, *and, turning to* PROFESSOR BELLIARTI, *offers him a cigar, very pleasantly.*] Have a cigar?

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. Thank you! [*Takes one and puts it in his pocket.*] Ahem!

[*Turning his back, pointedly, he takes up his violin, which is in perfect tune, and tunes it, with a smile on his face, but only his friendly back toward* AURELIA *and* CAPTAIN JINKS.

CAPTAIN JINKS. [*To* AURELIA.] Shan't I tell him?

AURELIA. I think he'd rather *I* told him — he's such a dear, sensitive old thing!

CAPTAIN JINKS. And then afterwards *I* will ask his consent; don't you think that would please him?

AURELIA. Oh, yes, do. It will make him feel he is something to both of us! How nice

of you to have the idea! Come back in quarter of an hour.

CAPTAIN JINKS. It's one o'clock; I'll be back on the minute of fifteen past! But I won't be able to stay, for I have an engagement, at *two*, that must not be put off.

AURELIA. [*Happy and smiling.*] Oh, I'll excuse you!

CAPTAIN JINKS. [*Stopping and looking into her eyes a moment.*] *This is no dream?* You're sure I'm *awake?*

AURELIA. Let's see! [*She looks around, first at* PROFESSOR BELLIARTI, *whom she sees still has his back turned, and then, leaning over, she kisses* CAPTAIN JINKS.] How is it? — Awake?

CAPTAIN JINKS. Not sure yet — try again.

AURELIA. [*Laughing.*] No, *siree!!* Good-by.

[*Giving him her hand, which he presses.*

CAPTAIN JINKS. Good-by. [*He starts to go. At the door, he hesitates and stands looking at* AURELIA. *She slowly joins him at the door, questioningly.*] Are you sure whether *you're* awake or not?

AURELIA. *Quite sure!* But I may be uncertain in fifteen minutes!

CAPTAIN JINKS. Don't ask *Papa Belliarti* then,—*I'll* be back! [*He exits.*

AURELIA. Papa Belliarti!

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. [*With his back still turned.*] Has he gone?

AURELIA. Yes, you silly old goose! [*Going to him, she takes him lovingly by the shoulders.*] Turn around!

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. So my singing bird is caught at last, eh! [*She hides her happy, blushing face in his arms.*] I'm very glad! [*He*

speaks this latter sentence with tears in his voice and eyes.] Very — glad, for her sake! But I'll miss you, little girl!

AURELIA. It isn't to make any difference to you at all! Let me tell you —

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. Sh! Not now. Mrs. Gee is coming; I sent for her to accompany me on the piano for the ballet ladies.

[MRS. GREENBOROUGH *enters at this moment through the double doors at back.*

MRS. GREENBOROUGH. Good afternoon, everybody. Papa Belliarti sent for me, Aurelia, to —

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. I told her, Madam.

MRS. GREENBOROUGH. [*Looking around the room, under the sofa, behind the chairs, and even absent-mindedly on the piano and mantelpiece.*] Aurelia, I can't find my bustle anywhere; I believe that chambermaid has stolen it!

AURELIA. Dear heart! If you had any more bustle, I don't know where you'd put it!

MRS. GREENBOROUGH. Oh, well, of course I had to have a makeshift, so I took all those nice newspapers that had our arrival in.

AURELIA. You both know why I've had these dancers come! I want everything to-night as near perfection as possible! No rough edges, no horrid slip-ups! And the dancing at yesterday's rehearsal was awful! How many ladies are coming, Papa?

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. Seven — the leads!

AURELIA. Good! If *they're* all right, the others can't go wrong. I have especial reasons, *besides it being my New York début, why I want everything to-night to be perfect!* Haven't I, Papa Belliarti? [*Whispers to him.*] Shall I tell her, Papa?

MRS. GREENBOROUGH. [*Curious.*] Well, now, Aurelia, I consider you're real tantalizing, if you have secrets —

[*Interrupted.*

AURELIA. If you keep on talking, dear heart, I can never tell you.

MRS. GREENBOROUGH. *Talking! Me!* It's twenty years since I've spoken one complete sentence of any length, all the way through.

AURELIA. Well, then, to make up, I'll tell you. Stand over there! [*Placing her.*] Lean against the table, so as to have some support if you should feel faint! There!

[*Having bolstered* MRS. GREENBOROUGH *against the centre-table, she crosses the room to* PROFESSOR BELLIARTI, *and takes his arm. They stand facing* MRS. GREENBOROUGH. PROFESSOR BELLIARTI *hums a few bars of the*

Mendelssohn wedding march, and they slowly approach MRS. GREENBOROUGH.

MRS. GREENBOROUGH. Good gracious, I hope —

[*Interrupted.*

AURELIA. Ssh! — Papa Belliarti and I are very happy!

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. What?

AURELIA. Well — *Aren't you?*

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. Yes, dear. Yes! Of course — only! —

MRS. GREENBOROUGH. [*Excited.*] Do go on; I'm eaten up with curiosity, I'm guessing —

[*Interrupted.*

AURELIA. You're guessing wrong! I'm going to be married!

MRS. GREENBOROUGH. Bless my soul! To Papa Belliarti!

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. That's a crazy idea!

AURELIA. No! No! Go on with your guessing! Who is it?

MRS. GREENBOROUGH. Dear heart, I *can't* guess!

AURELIA. Catch me, and I'll tell you! [*She runs, gaily laughing, around the table, then around a big armchair, and then around* PROFESSOR BELLIARTI, MRS. GREENBOROUGH *running after her and talking all the time.* AURELIA *dodges around* BELLIARTI, *turns suddenly, and herself catches* MRS. GREENBOROUGH, *and gives her a hug and a kiss. Then she drags her over to the piano, plumps her down on the piano-stool, facing the keys, and, leaning over her back, with her own hands on the piano, plays "Captain Jinks."*] *Now!* Can't you guess?

MRS. GREENBOROUGH. [*Gives a little high scream of delight.*] Eeh! It's the young man who gave me the booky the day we landed!

AURELIA. [*Hugging her delightedly around the neck.*] Of course! Do you suppose there is another man in this whole world I'd marry!

MRS. GREENBOROUGH. I *thought* he liked us, that very day!

AURELIA. I'm so happy! I'm no Prima Donna now; I'm only a girl, and the happiest girl that ever was! Listen! You two dear people think I've been singing these last two years, don't you? Wait till you hear me to-night! You'll say I never sang before! There's only one man in this world for me, and I'm going to marry him! [*She hugs* PROFESSOR BELLIARTI *impulsively.*] What do you think of that for *real* JOY!

[*There is a knock on the hall door.*

AURELIA. Come in! Come in, *everybody!*

[PETER *enters.*

PETER. Please, ma'am, there's a party of

females says they has an engagement with you. I thought they was kiddin', so I wouldn't let'm in till I asted you.

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. The Ballet Ladies!

AURELIA. Show them up, Peter; they're *artistes!*

PETER. They're right here. [*He calls into hall.*] Come along in!

[*And goes out after they have entered.*

[*The* SEVEN BALLET LADIES *enter. Three are young and pretty. Three are about fifty; one of these three is rather stout and one is very thin. The seventh is inclined to* embonpoint *also, but bravely restricted at every curve. She hails from the Paris Opera. The thin one is a widow, and wears a widow's weeds. Her dress is a trifle short, and shows a hair's-breadth escape of white*

stocking above her prunella boots. She brings with her, leading by the hand, a small child. Her offspring is dressed in white piqué, and wears pantalettes and goloshes. They all say "good day." *Two of the younger ones are rather free and impertinent in their manner; the others are somewhat embarrassed. All carry little bags or parcels, supposed to contain their ballet dresses. The widow's is done up in an old newspaper.*

AURELIA. How do you do, ladies!

[*They all bow and murmur again a greeting.*

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. Madame Trentoni wants to have the performance perfection to-night, and so she thought a little quiet rehearsal of the principal ladies of the ballet here, with her, a good thing all around.

AURELIA. You did beautifully last night,

but you know this new rose-figure Professor Belliarti is teaching you is very difficult, and if there is the slightest mistake it is ruined.

[*There is a nervous movement of all the seven, several clearing their throats, others slightly changing their position from one foot to the other. One or two, including the widow, look very supercilious, as if to say, "Oh, dear me! think of* her *telling us what* is *and what* ain't *easy!* — us, *who are old enough to be her grandmother!" Though I'm sure they wouldn't have put it in just that way. They would probably have spoken of her as a "raw amateur," and of themselves as "trained* artistes."

Professor Belliarti. [*Opening the folding doors at the back, shows the big empty room.*] We may use this room, too, if we need it to dance in.

[*The* BALLET LADIES *look in its direction.*

AURELIA. We're all going to try our very best, aren't we, to-night?

THIRD BALLET LADY. [*With a curtsy.*] Si, si, Signora.

SIXTH BALLET LADY. [*The widow.*] Oh, it'll be hall roight. There ain't no trouble with that polka step!

FOURTH BALLET LADY. Dat vas nicht ein polka shtep!

FIRST BALLET LADY. [MISS PETTITOES.] Yes, it was!

FOURTH BALLET LADY. Nein! Nein! I dell you dat vas ein —

[*Interrupted.*

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. [*Firmly.*] Ladies!

FOURTH BALLET LADY. Dat vas nicht ein polka sthep!

First Ballet Lady. Miss Hochspitz is always quarrelling, sir; that's why she had to leave Germany and come over here!

Fourth Ballet Lady. Och Himmel! Dat vos not drue, mein herr! She is von *cat*, dis Caroline Peddidoes!

Professor Belliarti. Come, come, Fräulein; remember, I always insist on my ballet being a happy family.

[Miss Hochspitz *pinches* Miss Pettitoes. Miss Pettitoes *slaps* Miss Hochspitz's *face. All the* Ballet Ladies *join in, and there is a general quarrel.*

Aurelia. Ladies! *please* do remember we engage you to dance, not to *sing!* We'll do all the squabbling ourselves! You have some things with you to rehearse in?

Sixth Ballet Lady. Oh, yes, Miss, we've

hall got combing jackets and hour regular re-'earsing costumes, the rest of the way down.

[*They all show their bundles.*

AURELIA. Where'll they change?

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. In here.

[*Motioning to the big room at back.*

MRS. GREENBOROUGH. No; let them come to my room.

AURELIA. They can't go through the hall after they're dressed!

MRS. GREENBOROUGH. They don't have to; that door to the right [*pointing off in the big room*] opens into a private passage which connects straight with my room. It's the way I always come.

AURELIA. Very well, then, ladies, please, if you will kindly go with Mrs. Greenborough.

MRS. GREENBOROUGH. Follow me, etc. —

[*She leads the way, talking, followed by the* SEVEN BALLET LADIES, *the widow still leading her child.* BELLIARTI *closes the door after them. Then he comes slowly to* AURELIA, *watching her with a sweet smile. When he reaches her, he takes her two hands.*

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. I'm as happy as you, my dear. There's only one worry — is he worthy of you?

AURELIA. He's worth a dozen of me, voice and all!

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. [*Sitting in the big armchair by the table.*] Still, he is all the time with one gay company of young men who lead what you call *very quick lives!* So let old Papa Belliarti poke about a little and ask a few questions, before you make the engagement public, will you?

AURELIA. If you want to. You will be proud, I know, of all you hear! Women, dear Papa, are perfect barometers for a good and bad man!

[*She sits on the floor at his feet, and lays her head on his knees.*

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. And nothing gets out of order like a barometer! They're always pointing to Fair Weather when it's raining cats and dogs!

AURELIA. [*Laughing.*] True; but when you hear me sing to-night, you'll acknowledge that I am in perfect condition!

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. [*Leaning over and putting his arm about her neck.*] I hope so. And I hope your new life, my dear, will be one long, happy dance. Not the new-fangled step, this polka redowa, — for that is a love at first sight that will die a violent death, exhausted before

the honeymoon is over! Not the waltz, for a waltz with us must need have some reverses, and I want no reverses in my little girl's life. Not a Virginia reel, for that entails long separations from one's partner, and a flirtatious swinging of *all* the men down the line. But I would have your life's dance the minuet, which is not so fast as to tire you out, whose music is Mozart's, — our best — a dance where you and your partner are never long separated, and where you mingle with your amusement a certain graceful graciousness toward each other which will keep familiarity forever from breeding contempt.

AURELIA. [*With a choke in her voice.*] Our life shall be a minuet, dear father, and you must teach us *both our steps.*

[*A knock on the hall door.*

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. [*Rising.*] Come in!

[AURELIA *also rises.* PETER *enters.*

PETER. Two lardy-dah gents to see *you*, and an old lady for *you*, ma'am.

[*Giving cards to* PROFESSOR BELLIARTI *and one to* AURELIA.

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. [*Reading his cards.*] Mr. Charles La Martine and Mr. Van Vorkenburg?

PETER. Them's the two what always finds Madame Trenton out! They've been to the theaytre after you, and they says it's important.

AURELIA. [*With suppressed happiness, and proudly.*] *See* who my visitor is!

[*Shows* PROFESSOR BELLIARTI *her card.*

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. [*Reading card.*] Who is it, — his mother?

AURELIA. It must be! Come already to

congratulate me! He never even told me she was here, and we were both rather afraid of her.

PETER. Well, are *you* out to them gents, too?

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. No, show them to my room, and say I'll be with them immediately.

PETER. [*To* AURELIA.] And the old party?

AURELIA. [*With pointed emphasis.*] Show the *distinguished lady* here at once!

PETER. Gee!

[*And with his tongue in his cheek, he exits.*

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. She'll be a proud mother when she sees you. I hope to be back in time to be presented to her.

AURELIA. [*Half teasing.*] I don't know if she'll approve of you, Papa! She's against *acting!*

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. *Dancing is a higher art!*

AURELIA. So it is, sometimes!

[*They both laugh.*

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. Margaret Fuller and Ralph Waldo Emerson were once discussing Fanny Elssler. "It isn't dancing, Margaret, it's poetry," said Emerson. "My dear Ralph," back spoke Miss Fuller, "it's not poetry, it's *religion.*"

[*A delicate knock is heard on the hall door.*

AURELIA. [*A little frightened.*] There she is!

[PROFESSOR BELLIARTI *opens the door, bowing low.* MRS. JINKS *enters.* PROFESSOR BELLIARTI, *bowing, goes out, closing the door after him.* MRS. JINKS *is an elderly, sweetly severe, delicate-featured little woman, dressed in rich, light brown silk, but in a past fashion. She wears full spreading skirts, and carries a small parasol to match her dress.*

MRS. JINKS. [*Inclining her head with a serious, dignified grace.*] Madame Trentoni?

AURELIA. [*With a low curtsy.*] Yes, Madam. You have heard? [MRS. JINKS *bows her head in acquiescence.*] How good of you to come so soon! Ah, I must kiss you!

MRS. JINKS. *Please don't!*

AURELIA. [*Kissing her.*] I do so want you to love me!

MRS. JINKS. [*Like a stone statue when she is kissed, and showing no flurry.*] Forgive me, but I extremely dislike demonstrative people!

AURELIA. I'm so sorry. Will you sit down?

MRS. JINKS. [*With a quiet and firm, though sweet voice, very serious and rather haughty.*] Thank you, I would rather stand. [AURELIA *looks up, frightened.*] I am afraid the reason for my visit is not a pleasant one. By all means, however, sit down yourself.

AURELIA. [*At once on the defensive.*] Oh, no, I shall stand if you do!

MRS. JINKS. My son does not yet know of my arrival, but I received a letter from him the other day, saying he intended asking you to marry him. I've not slept a wink since!

AURELIA. I regret that your night's rest has been disturbed.

MRS. JINKS. Hoping to reach you before he takes so fatal a step, to assure you such a thing is impossible, I took the first train.

AURELIA. I'm afraid you took a *slow* one, for you are too late!

MRS. JINKS. He's already proposed?

AURELIA. And been accepted! Not half an hour ago. [MRS. JINKS *closes her eyes as if she were going to faint, and sinks into a chair.*] Don't, please, take it so to heart! Please —

MRS. JINKS. Pardon me, I don't mean to

be rude. This marriage cannot take place. You *must* give him up.

AURELIA. It is quite impossible! I am no *Camille*, Madam!

[*Sitting determinedly at the opposite side of the table.*

MRS. JINKS. No what?

AURELIA. No *Marguerite Gautier.*

MRS. JINKS. I do not know the lady.

AURELIA. [*Bitterly.*] Oh, she wouldn't move in your set! But don't you remember the scene in the play, "Camille," where she gives up the lover to satisfy his father? It ruined both their lives.

MRS. JINKS. I never go to the theatre.

AURELIA. That's a pity, because I am sure if you did, you would not be giving us both this painful experience. Well, I am a good woman, Mrs. Jinks, and I love your son.

MRS. JINKS. [*Pointedly.*] You are also an *actress,* I believe?

AURELIA. Well, there's a difference of opinions about that! But I *am* an Opera Singer, and not ashamed of it!

MRS. JINKS. The Jinkses have never been connected with any profession, except the *Church!*

AURELIA. Every little while the Church and Stage come plump together like that, and I think it does them both good!

MRS. JINKS. The Jinkses are an old and distinguished family; and yours?

AURELIA. I'm doing my honest best to make it distinguished.

MRS. JINKS. But you must acknowledge the thing you threaten doing isn't done. Your bringing up, your lives — everything is at a variance! Happiness is *impossible!*

AURELIA. I disagree with you so long as our hearts are in accord!

MRS. JINKS. Listen. My brother has nearly arranged for a magnificent diplomatic position for my son, his nephew, in the event of Greeley's election, which is certain, of course. This marriage with you will make such a career impossible — ruin his chances — shatter all our hopes for the future!

AURELIA. [*Rising.*] Madam, I am not much more than a girl, but really —

MRS. JINKS. You *look* very young, but they say you stage women do wonderful things with your cosmetics.

AURELIA. When I am a certain age, I may resort to them. [MRS. JINKS *rises offended.*] You do not realize what sort of a woman you are speaking to. As I started to say, I am

young, but I have a will of my own and a heart of my own, in which your son has told me his happiness lies. Loving him as I do, and believing in him, I shall not think of insulting his *manhood* by proposing to release him from his engagement.

MRS. JINKS. You will separate me from my son?

AURELIA. [*Goes a little nearer her.*] No, indeed, I will share him with you. His mother's love remains yours.

MRS. JINKS. I have not yet seen my son. I shall appeal to the mother-love you speak of.

[*Starting to go.*

AURELIA. May I give you a hint? Don't say horrid things about *me!* For if he's the man I think him, that would only steel his heart against you.

MRS. JINKS. He's cried his baby troubles out on my knees, and his boy's sorrows out in my arms! He shall empty his man's heart into my arms, too!

AURELIA. Dear me! If he does that, I'm afraid you'll find them rather full; for *I* was all his *man's heart* held half an hour ago!

MRS. JINKS. You are frivolous! Good-by, Madam.

AURELIA. No! don't go like that.

MRS. JINKS. Will you give my boy up?

AURELIA. No!

[MRS. JINKS *makes an inclination of the head. She is about to exit, but meets* PROFESSOR BELLIARTI *coming in.* PROFESSOR BELLIARTI *is very excited, which feeling he tries to control on seeing* MRS. JINKS.

AURELIA. Oh, Papa Belliarti, I'm glad you've

come down. I want to present you to *Mrs. Jinks*, my *future husband's mother!* Mrs. Jinks, Professor Belliarti, my foster-father and the *Ballet Master* of our Opera Company! [PROFESSOR BELLIARTI *bows low.* MRS. JINKS *closes her eyes and gasps; then, giving the merest inclination of her head, she exits.* AURELIA, *excited, slams the door after her.*] She came after my happiness, but she didn't get it! Tell Mrs. Greenborough to bring the ladies in now!

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. Not yet — not yet! Papa Belliarti is after your happiness, too, but to save it for you, to save it for you.

AURELIA. What is it? What's the matter? No accident?

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. You mustn't marry this Captain Jinks.

AURELIA. *You* too!

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. He's a blackguard!

AURELIA. Papa, that's not true! How dare you! [PROFESSOR BELLIARTI *pours forth a flood of Italian, speaking rapidly and with great excitement and emotion.* AURELIA *stops him, taking hold of his arm and holding it tightly, but affectionately.*] Speak English! *Speak English!* You know I can't understand Italian when you are excited! What do you mean? Does he, like his mother, want to back out?

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. [*Grimly.*] Oh, no, not he! Not he!

[*Speaking the last "not he" very angrily.*

AURELIA. Then how dared you call him —

[*Interrupted.*

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. He is marrying you for your money! For what *you* will *make* for him!

AURELIA. I don't believe it!

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. He made one bet he would marry you after these young men told him they had heard from Mrs. Gee that you were rich. He made one bet with La Martine and Van Vorkenburg that he would marry you!

AURELIA. I tell you I don't believe it!

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. A thousand dollars he bet them! Even Mapleson knows it.

AURELIA. Papa! You didn't tell *Mapleson?*

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. He heard it from a reporter.

AURELIA. It's in the papers?

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. No. The reporter is a nice gentleman. He was told by a newsboy on the dock, the day you landed, but never printed it.

AURELIA. But I don't believe the story. I

tell you, it isn't *true!* Captain Jinks *never* made such a bet!

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. I have proof, and I intend to ask him to his face!

AURELIA. Yes; do that, Papa! I'm not afraid of his answer.

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. *But* if he says he *did* bet so?

AURELIA. *Don't let* him say it!

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. I will make him speak the *truth*, and if he confess he did make that bet, you must *not* marry him. He would break your heart, darling, before the honeymoon was over.

[*A knock on the hall door, but neither hear it.*

AURELIA. Oh, no, it's too great an insult! I *know* he isn't capable.

[*Another knock, and then* PETER *enters.*

PETER. *Please*, are you all deaf? Captain

Jinks is here again, and says you're all expecting him, but I wouldn't let him up till I asted.

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. Send Captain Jinks straight here.

PETER. Yes, sir. Golly!

[*Exits.*

AURELIA. *I* couldn't ask him.

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. You needn't. But will you give me permission to break off your engagement?

AURELIA. *If* it's true. But I *know* it isn't!

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. [*Pointing to the room at the back.*] Go in there. Listen to what we say, and, when it is sufficient in your eyes to break off everything between us, make some signal — drop this book.

[*Taking a book from the table.*

AURELIA. [*Going to the door, turns there.*]

Ask him outright if he made the bet — and be sure he says "*No*" loud.

[*She goes into the other room and closes the doors behind her.*

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. If wishing could only make him turn out to be worthy of my girl! — [*A knock on the hall door. He pulls himself together.*] Come in.

[CAPTAIN JINKS *dashes in, very happy and expectant.*

CAPTAIN JINKS. Ah, sir! The very man I wanted to see!

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. And *me* too.

CAPTAIN JINKS. I have a *most* important question to ask you!

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. *Me too!*

CAPTAIN JINKS. Have a cigar?

[*Offering one.*

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. No, thank you! And here's the one back you gave me a little while ago.

[*Giving the cigar from his pocket.*

CAPTAIN JINKS. [*Taking the cigar, rather perplexed and not understanding.*] Have a chair?

[*Offering one, and about to sit himself.*

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. No!

[CAPTAIN JINKS, *about to sit down — doesn't.*

CAPTAIN JINKS. Ah, well then, straight to the point, Signor Belliarti. [*Bowing elaborately, mocking, happy.*] Will you give me your adopted daughter to be my wife?

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. *Yes!* if you will give me your word of honor you didn't sign that paper!

[*Giving him, with trembling hand, the paper* CAPTAIN JINKS *signed in Act I.*

CAPTAIN JINKS. *What paper?* [*Taking the paper from* BELLIARTI — *aghast.*] By Jove! My I O U! How did you get hold of this?

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. Good Lord! You know what it is? Then you *did* sign it? You're a blackguard, sir, to try and cheat my child!

CAPTAIN JINKS. [*Throws the paper on the table.*] Hold on a minute! Hold on! You're an old man, and I can't treat you as I would a younger, but you must take that "blackguard" back!

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. Never! If it's true you made this wager about my little girl! Forget my age, if you like, but I *won't* take "blackguard" back!

CAPTAIN JINKS. Yes, you will, if it's a lie! Where is Madame Trentoni? I want to see her herself.

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. First answer me my question. Is that your signature? Did you make that wager?

CAPTAIN JINKS. [*After a moment's pause, ashamed.*] Yes — [*Again a moment's pause; the book is dropped by* AURELIA *in the next room, and is distinctly heard as it strikes the floor. The sound rouses* CAPTAIN JINKS *and* PROFESSOR BELLIARTI.] But — [*Interrupted.*

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. [*Beside himself.*] *Not one other word, sir!* I am asked by Madame Trentoni to take back the troth she plighted with you, and to tell you that all is forever over between you!

CAPTAIN JINKS. I won't have that! I can explain!

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. Explain! Your signature *explains* too much already!

CAPTAIN JINKS. I don't acknowledge you or your authority! I'll see the lady herself!

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. Not with my permission. [*Stepping in front of him.*

CAPTAIN JINKS. *Without* it then! I tell you I won't take your word for it! *She* herself gave me her promise, and she herself must break it.

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. I don't believe she'll ever willingly set eyes on you again!

CAPTAIN JINKS. She *must*, I tell you! It's an outrage! It's a conspiracy!

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. There you are right! A damnable conspiracy against a sweet woman; a contemptible insult to as lovely a girl as lives. Good-by!

CAPTAIN JINKS. I won't leave this room till I've seen her.

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. Yes, you will.

CAPTAIN JINKS. I will not!

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. Then the police would be called in to remove you, and you would add — to what you have already done — a public scandal for Madame Trentoni, on the eve of her *début.*

CAPTAIN JINKS. On the eve of her *début?* No, no! I mustn't do that — [*Quietly.*] Listen about that bet — [*Interrupted.*

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. Not one further word about it! The paper speaks for itself. Good-by.

CAPTAIN JINKS. [*Seizes the leaf, and tears it angrily.*] That for your damned paper! You shall dance at our wedding yet, Papa Belliarti! [*Going to the door.*

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. It will be the *danse Macabre* then!

CAPTAIN JINKS. [*Turning at the door.*] Wait and see! I'm aware who's at the bottom of this, and I'll find them both before the afternoon is over. And I'll make you glad to take that "blackguard" back! You don't know *me.*

[*He exits.*

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. I wish to God we didn't!

[*He sinks into the armchair beside the table. The double doors at the back open slowly, and* AURELIA *steals in. She is a tearful, tragic, woe-begone-looking creature.*

AURELIA. Gone?

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. Yes.

AURELIA. [*Coming up behind his chair.*] Didn't you hear me drop the book a second time?

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. No; what was that for?

AURELIA. To hint perhaps I had better see him after all, just to hear what excuse he had to make.

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. No, no, my dear, — better not.

AURELIA. Why didn't he *lie* about it? Why did he own he made it?

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. His case was desperate! Come, you must be strong now, and hold up your head.

AURELIA. I can't, I can't, Papa! My head is as heavy as my heart! [*Sitting on his lap, and throwing her arms about his neck, she sobs.*] And I shan't sing to-night! — You mustn't ask me! — I — I couldn't sing a note!

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. Not make your *début*, to-night!

AURELIA. [*Her tears gone, becoming angry*

and a little hard.] No! You can send word to Mapleson! You can do what you please. [*Leaving his knee, she paces up and down the room.*] I will *not* sing to-night! — Don't you know what I told you a little while ago, that I was so happy I would sing as I never sang before? Well, I was wrong. [*Beginning to cry again.*] What I should have said was — I will be so miserable, so utterly unhappy, that I'll never *sing another note!*

[*She sits on the piano-stool, and buries her tearful face in her arms, over the keys.*

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. [*Really alarmed.*] My dear child! My dear! [*Going to her.*] Where's your character? You can't give way like this. Your whole fùture's at stake.

AURELIA. [*Sobbing.*] I don't *want* any future!

[PROFESSOR BELLIARTI *pulls the bell-rope.*

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. You must think of Mapleson, too! You haven't the right to sacrifice *him*.

AURELIA. He can say I have a "cold."

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. No one will believe it. [*Moving the chairs from the centre of the room, back against the wall.*] And the public will be down on you.

AURELIA. Oh, why doesn't some one invent a new kind of cold, that people will believe you when you've got it.

[PETER *enters in answer to the bell.*

PETER. Yes, sir.

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. Help me to move this table.

PETER. Yes, sir.

[*They move the centre-table out of the way, and to the opposite side of the room from* AURELIA.

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. [*Aside to* PETER.] Listen! Go downstairs to the two Blackg— *gentlemen!* — you will find smoking in my room, — and ask them to wait a little longer. Say I may want them to apologize to Madame Trentoni before they leave the hotel.

PETER. All right, sir.

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. Say nothing to any one, but watch this bell downstairs — you'll be *paid* for it — and if I pull *three* hard, separate *rings*, bring the two — [*the word sticks in his throat, and he has to swallow before he can speak it*] *gentlemen* here at once.

PETER. Yes, sir. [*Goes to the hall door.*

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. [*Loudly.*] And tell Mrs. Greenborough we are ready.

PETER. Yes, sir. [*Exits.*

AURELIA. [*Rising.*] What? Do you think I

can go through their dance with those women, now?

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. [*Putting his arm about her.*] Yes; *I ask you* to do it, dear.

AURELIA. No, no! And what for? I tell you I shan't sing to-night!

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. Dear girl, you must! Pull yourself together, if only for *my* sake!

AURELIA. Papa, Papa! I can't. My heart is really breaking!

[PROFESSOR BELLIARTI *moves the rest of the furniture out of the way, so as to leave the centre of the room free to the dancers.* AURELIA *leans against the piano.*

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. Don't let him see it. Don't let these three blackguard men know how hardly you take it! Let your pride save you. Be a woman!

AURELIA. I *am* one, and that's why my heart is breaking.

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. Be a *man* then, and don't let Jinks win!

[MRS. GREENBOROUGH *and the* BALLET LADIES *come volubly through the double doors. The* BALLET LADIES *are dressed in old tights, with discarded tarlatan skirts and combing jackets; several keep on their hats, and the widow has not removed her bonnet and veil.*

MRS. GREENBOROUGH. My love, I thought you'd never send for us. Whatever in the world — [*Interrupted.*

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. You stop chattering, Mrs. Gee, and get to the work at the piano. What can you play?

MRS. GREENBOROUGH. [*Seating herself at piano.*] I know the ballet out of "Robert, the Devil."

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. [*Humming a line to see if the time is right.*] That will do. [*He turns to the* SIXTH BALLET LADY, *the widow, who still holds her child's hand.*] Did you *have* to bring that child?

SIXTH BALLET LADY. Yes, sir; I couldn't leave her 'ome, sir; but she's as good as gold — never stirs a 'air nor breathes a syllabub. [*She takes the child to the sofa, and, lifting her up in her two hands, plumps her down into the corner, hard. Here the child remains without moving or speaking.* MRS. MAGGITT *kisses the child, and then turns to* PROFESSOR BELLIARTI.] Please, sir, I wish as you'd taike me hout of the second row and put me in the front. I don't show at hall be'ind, and I'm a poor widow, and my legs is hall I've got.

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. You forget the old

adage, Mrs Maggitt, "Distance lends enchantment." Come now, ladies!

[PROFESSOR BELLIARTI *gets his violin and bow ready. The other* BALLET LADIES *stand and loll about. The* FIRST BALLET LADY *sits comfortably in a chair. The* SECOND BALLET LADY *sits on the arm of this chair, and arranges the straps of her slippers. The* THIRD BALLET LADY *leans against the wall, believing that the World is hers! The* FOURTH BALLET LADY *keeps rubbing the soles of her slippers up and down on the carpet to see that it is not too slippery. The* FIFTH BALLET LADY *fidgets with her dress and her waist, etc. The* SIXTH BALLET LADY *practises her steps, and the* SEVENTH BALLET LADY *pirouettes on one toe, and throws imaginary kisses.*

FOURTH BALLET LADY. I wish, Miss Peddidoes, you vill nicht so push me in der waist mid your elbows so sharp!

FIRST BALLET LADY. If you'd keep your big feet in your own place, and not keep dancing on mine, there wouldn't be any trouble!

FOURTH BALLET LADY. Och Himmel! I dance besser as you mit your Chinese does!

FIRST BALLET LADY. Sauer-kraut!

[*Sticking out her tongue at her German sister artiste.*

[*The latter devotee of Terpsichore responds with an even more unladylike grimace. This leads to an immediate general imbroglio among all the excitable coryphées, the seven dividing themselves into rival factions.* PROFESSOR BELLIARTI, *after several ineffectual efforts to make himself heard, goes in amongst*

them, at no little personal risk, and, aided by MRS. GREENBOROUGH, *manages to separate the two principal somewhat-draggled and highly-flushed contestants.*

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. [*Striking his violin with his bow.*] Attention, ladies, please! [*There is a general movement; those sitting, rise.*] Let us rehearse the *Pas de Rose* in the first act. [*He goes to* AURELIA.] Make an effort, dearie. Speak to them. Tell them what you want.

AURELIA. No! You tell them. I can't, I can't!

[*The* BALLET LADIES *go to a large bundle of artificial roses, placed on a table in the corner, and each takes one.* MISS PETTITOES *snatches her flower from* MISS HOCHSPITZ'S *hand. There is an awful moment, but the widow pours oil on the waters, and quiet is preserved.*

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. An elaborate ballet in

this opera has not been done in America before, and we want it to be perfect.

[*The* BALLET LADIES *take their positions.* AURELIA *starts to leave the room.* PROFESSOR BELLIARTI *stops her.*

AURELIA. Let me go to my room!

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. No, dearie, please, *please* stay! Don't let these women see you are in trouble. Are you ready, Mrs. Gee?

MRS. GREENBOROUGH. Good gracious, I've been — [*Interrupted.*

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. Very good! Ready, please! [*He and* MRS. GREENBOROUGH *begin playing.*] One, two, three, — [*Ad lib. The* BALLET LADIES *begin their dance,* PROFESSOR BELLIARTI *leading and directing them, dancing with them, showing them, correcting them; after a minute, he speaks aside to* AURELIA.] Try to watch them,

dear. [*He continues with the dance, but again, a few minutes later, he stops and speaks to her, the ballet always continuing without him.*] Be brave, little girl! You have your life before you, and if the fellow's worthless, why let him spoil it?

AURELIA. That's perfectly true, only —

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. Keep only one idea now in your mind — *your appearance to-night.*

AURELIA. I'll try, I'll try!

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. That's my brave girl. Look at that silly creature! [*Directing her attention to one of the* BALLET LADIES, *he tries to excite her interest in the dancers.*] They're doing very badly. What do you think?

AURELIA. [*Watching them.*] Oh, atrocious! They aren't ballet girls, they're tenpins!

[*The first movement of the ballet is finished.*

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. [*Urging her.*] Show them! That's the only way they will learn.

AURELIA. No, I can't, — not now. Who dances the solo?

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. [*To the* BALLET LADIES.] The *pas seul*, please! [*All but the* FOURTH *and* FIRST BALLET LADIES *retire and take seats. The* FOURTH BALLET LADY *comes forward.*] No, no, Miss Hochspitz, not the next figure; the *pas seul*, Miss Pettitoes!

FIRST BALLET LADY. [*Laughs.*] Hochspitz doing a solo! Ha, ha! A cabbage by any other name would smell as sweet! [*She gracefully kicks a satirical kiss to her with her right foot.*] "Blue Danube," please.

THIRD BALLET LADY. [*To the* FIRST BALLET LADY.] Ssh! Ssh!

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. [*Who has taken the*

First Ballet Lady *to one side.*] Dance badly, *very badly!*

First Ballet Lady. [*Insulted.*] Badly?

Professor Belliarti. Yes, it will be all right. I have a reason.

[*The* First Ballet Lady *dances not very well.*

Professor Belliarti *watches* Aurelia, *who remains indifferent.*

Professor Belliarti. [*To the* First Ballet Lady.] That isn't bad enough — dance worse!

First Ballet Lady. [*Angry.*] I *can't!*

Professor Belliarti. Try! —

First Ballet Lady. [*Still dancing.*] I'm afraid I'll lose my job.

Professor Belliarti. You will if you don't do as I ask.

First Ballet Lady. [*Very angry.*] Oh! All right! [*She dances very badly.*

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. [*To* AURELIA.] Now, do watch, dear.

AURELIA. [*Noticing.*] But that girl's awful!

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. [*To* AURELIA.] Show her.

AURELIA. No.

[*But she rises and pins up one side of her dress.*

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. [*To the* FIRST BALLET LADY.] Go on! *Worse!!*

[*He goes to the bell-rope and pulls three distinct times. The* FIRST BALLET LADY *dances a* pas seul *vilely.*

AURELIA. [*Excitedly.*] She's wrong! — *she's all wrong!!*

[*Pinning up the other side of her dress.*

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. [*To the* FIRST BALLET LADY.] You're wrong again!

[*The music stops.*

FIRST BALLET LADY. Wrong!

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. Show her, dear, show her! —

AURELIA. It's simple as daylight! Give me a rose!

[*Seizing her rose from* MISS PETTITOES.

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. That's right! [*Striking up on his violin.*] Now watch Madame Trentoni.

[MRS. GREENBOROUGH *begins playing again.*

AURELIA. [*Dancing.*] One — two — three —

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. [*Always playing.*] Ah, do you see the difference, Miss Pettitoes?

AURELIA. [*Dancing.*] Not as if you were made of *wood!* Ah, Papa, I wish I were!

[*Stops dancing as if she couldn't do it.*

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. Careful!

[PETER *enters, showing in* GUSSIE *and* CHARLIE.

PETER. Mr. La Martine, Mr. Van Vorkenburg!

[*The music stops again.*

AURELIA. [*Astonished.*] What?

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. [*To* AURELIA.] Your pride!

CHARLIE. [*Coming forward.*] We have come, Madame Trentoni, to apologize.

AURELIA. Apologize? I won't listen to you!

GUSSIE. We regret very much to have made you suffer.

AURELIA. Suffer! *I suffer?* [*Laughing.*] What for? You surely don't suppose I take this matter of Captain Jinks seriously? [*Laughing a little hysterically.*] I, who have the *world* at my feet! Suffer? [*With increased excitement.*] Excuse me, gentlemen, but I can't have my rehearsal interrupted. Continue, Mrs. Gee. Now, ladies,

please watch me! [MRS. GREENBOROUGH *plays.* AURELIA *dances with abandon.*] Smile and look happy! [*She does so pathetically, and then dances on with ever-increasing excitement.*] Dance as if you *loved* it! as if it *meant* something! Put your *whole heart* into it! if you're so lucky as to have one! [*Executing a difficult movement. All clap their hands, delighted at her dancing.* CHARLIE *and* GUSSIE *stand by, somewhat crest-fallen, and look questioningly at each other. They applaud, too, and then take advantage of the moment to slip out unnoticed.*] *Dance!!* Don't *walk! Dance* — as if you were *mad!* Dance! Never mind if you break your neck — there are worse things to break! *Dance!!* DANCE!!! [*The strain of music finishes, and she stops suddenly, throwing away her rose.*] Papa, *I will sing*, after all! I'll sing to every woman's heart

in that house, and if ever I succeed in my life, *I'll win to-night!*

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. Bravo! Bravo!

[AURELIA *turns, sees that* LA MARTINE *and* VAN VORKENBURG *are gone, and, in a revulsion of feeling, collapses in her old foster-father's arms, sobbing out pitifully,* "Oh, no, I can't do it, I can't do it," *as the curtain falls.*

END OF ACT II

THE THIRD ACT

MIDNIGHT OF THE SAME DAY. — *The same room as in the previous act,* — MADAME TRENTONI'S *parlor in the Brevoort House. The stage is lighted by chandelier with gas-jets.*

PETER. [*Entering with his arms full of flowers.*] Come on in!

[MARY *stands at the back with her arms also full of floral emblems,* — *a large windmill, baskets, a ship, and small bouquets.*

MARY. [*Who speaks with a decided English cockney accent.*] Oh, my! Wasn't it grand! [*Places the windmill of pink and white, dried daisies on the piano.*] I could 'ear 'em shouting way hup in the dressing-room!

PETER. [*Who is very hoarse.*] I bet they heard the gallery way over to Broadway! *I* led the gallery! and gee! I guess I broke my voice.

[*Deposits his flowers about.*

MARY. [*As she arranges.*] Did you see General Grant?

PETER. *Did* I? Didn't you hear us give three cheers when he come in? [*Very huskily.*] Hip! hip! hooray! And Sam Tilden — he's another big man — he got it just as good!

[*There is a knock at the hall door.*

MARY. Come in!

[*She hangs a wreath of pansies on a door-knob, and meets one of the hotel servants, who enters, laden down with more floral emblems, — small baskets with huge handles, pillows with "Welcome" on them, etc.* MARY *re-*

lieves him of his burden, and he exits. PETER *and* MARY *arrange the new pieces around the room.*

PETER. She got piles of flowers, didn't she?

MARY. Oh, this ain't harlf!

PETER. [*Sitting at the piano, and picking out "Captain Jinks" with one hand while he talks.*] When's she coming home?

MARY. [*Very busy.*] Soon as she can shake off her the newspaper gentlemen, and a 'eap of people.

PETER. She must have been tickled to death with the send-off we give her!

MARY. [*Loading down the mantel.*] No, something's the matter with her; you'd 'ave thought they was all a 'issing, instead of shouting, she looked that mournful, and heven took hon to crying once!

PETER. Aw, go West! You don't know what you're talking about! When I went behind, after the show, she was grinning fit to kill, telling them newspaper gents that it was the finest gang of folks she'd ever sung afore!

MARY. Yes, she told me, when she was chainging, hafter the third hact, that they was *dears* hin front, and that she just loved them, and was doing her very best.

PETER. Say, who do you think was there? I seen her down in the balcony, and crying fit to bust herself all through the last ack! The old lady whot was here this afternoon! [*He suddenly shouts.*] Look out! [*As Mary is about to put a large horseshoe of red immortelles, with a big "Pete" in white immortelles on it, off at one side of the room, in an inconspicuous place.*] What yer doing with my hor'shoe? [*Taking it from*

her.] It took my first month's wages in advance to get that! [*He places it proudly on the centre-table, stands off and looks at it.*] Ain't it a dream! Don't it look just like her!

MARY. Oh, lovely! Is heverything ready for the supper?

[*Going towards the double doors at the back, but* PETER *gets there before her, and stops her.*

PETER. Here, you can't go in! The hotel folks don't want any one in there afore her. It's all done up with regular Fourth of July decorations.

MARY. Well, there's more helegant hembelms downstairs, and the 'all gentleman don't seem to be bringing 'em hup. I fancy I'd better get 'em. [*And she goes out.*

[PETER *watches that she is surely gone, and then, opening one of the big double doors,*

whistles softly through his fingers, and waits a second. CAPTAIN JINKS *comes in eagerly.*

CAPTAIN JINKS. Is it safe?

PETER. Yes, for a minute; she's gone after more flower pieces. Are them yourn?

[*Pointing to some bouquets and baskets grouped together.*

CAPTAIN JINKS. Yes. [*Examining them. He adds to himself in an undertone:*] And not one of my notes removed! But I saw her pick up the white camellia. She must have read that!

PETER. Mary says she didn't pay no attention to none of her flowers, and even piped her eyes some!

CAPTAIN JINKS. Cried! My dear Peter, that's a good sign! [*Taking out a bundle of small notes from his pocket.*] If only she loves me, I'm sure I can make it all right. Come

along now, quick, put one of these notes on all the other flowers.

[*They begin, quickly pinning on notes to all the bouquets, baskets, etc.*

PETER. I don't know as I ought to be helping you this way. After all, I've *only got your word* for it that you didn't really mean to try and do Madame Trentoni out of her money.

CAPTAIN JINKS. Yes, but what did I tell you my word would be worth to you?

PETER. A couple o' fivers! But it's taking fearful risks, and I ain't got her *happiness* fer sale, I want yer to understand that. But say, you didn't send her all these; here's somebody else's card.

CAPTAIN JINKS. That's all right. [*Crossing to the flowers on the piano.*] Leave it on, but put mine, too. I want one of my notes on every single thing here!

PETER. [*Pinning the notes about.*] Gee! You're a great writer, ain't you? Have you written all them different?

CAPTAIN JINKS. No, they're all alike.

[*Coming to centre-table, he starts to pin a note on* PETER'S *horseshoe.*

PETER. Here! No, you don't! Look out! Not on that one! That's *mine!* I ain't goin' to hev no interference with *mine!*

CAPTAIN JINKS. Oh, come on, yours might be the only one she looked at! Let me put on my note, and I'll pay for the horseshoe.

PETER. But you won't pretend *you sent it?* Honest Injun?

CAPTAIN JINKS. Honest!

PETER. All right,—anything to oblige a friend; it'll be five dollars, please.

[MARY'S *voice is heard outside, saying:* "This way. Come straight along. Oh! I dropped

a bouquet; beg pardon." PETER *and* CAPTAIN JINKS *have stopped*, and CAPTAIN JINKS *goes to the double doors, quickly.*

CAPTAIN JINKS. Don't forget, you're to manage somehow that I get an interview with Mrs. Greenborough. No interview — no pay.

PETER. That's all right! You just trust yourself to little brother.

CAPTAIN JINKS. [*Thrusting a handful of notes into* PETER'S *hands.*] Try and get those on the rest of the flowers.

[*He exits.*

PETER. [*Calling after him.*] Quick! Hide in the further room; they may go in this one.

[*He shuts the doors as* MARY *enters, loaded down with more flowers, and followed by* MRS. STONINGTON *and* MISS MERRIAM, *without their hats and with a flower in their*

hair, the waist of MRS. STONINGTON'S *dress turned in a trifle at the neck.*

MARY. Won't you sit down, please? The hother guests will suttingly be 'ere soon.

[MARY *places about the flowers she has just brought up.* PETER *continues pinning on the notes.*

MRS. STONINGTON. It was very kind of Madame Trentoni to ask us to supper on such an occasion. She is the greatest singer I've ever heard. [*Turns to* MISS MERRIAM *and repeats with most careful enunciation.*] *An elegant singer!*

[MISS MERRIAM *smiles and nods, and makes a few rapid motions with her fingers.*

MRS. STONINGTON. Oh, yes, very hot! Where we sat — we were in the back row, gallery; we found it very difficult to get seats. [MARY *is about to pass her, carrying a small basket*

of flowers with a very high handle, on which is perched a stuffed pigeon with outstretched wings. MRS. STONINGTON *stops* MARY.] The dove! [*She examines the card, which is tied on with a blue ribbon, and then nods to* MISS MERRIAM.] Yes, *our* emblem.

MARY. I never 'eard Madam sing Traiviatter so magnificent before!

[*She crosses to the piano with the emblem.*

[MISS MERRIAM *motions again a few words to* MRS. STONINGTON.

MRS. STONINGTON. *No, indeed!* I didn't see a single bad thing in it! [MISS MERRIAM *motions again.*] No, sir, not a blessed thing! I agree with you to an iota; I think it's a sweetly pretty opera! [MISS MERRIAM *makes a few more rapid passes.*] Exactly! Neither did I understand what it was about, but nobody has

any need to; it's enough to hear her voice and see her clothes! [MISS MERRIAN *motives.*] My dear, you never spoke a truer word! You can find a bad meaning in most everything in this world, if you want to, and only try hard enough.

MRS. GREENBOROUGH. [*Calls outside in the hall.*] Mary!

MARY. Yes, Madam.

[*Going to the hall door, she opens it.*

MRS. STONINGTON. Here's dear Mrs. Greenborough! and she does look sweetly pretty to-night!

[MRS. GREENBOROUGH *enters, both arms full of floral trophies.*

MRS. GREENBOROUGH. What an elegant triumph, Mary! Did you *ever* in all the days you've been with Madame Trentoni —

[*Interrupted.*

MARY. No, indeed, ma'am. [*Helping* MRS. GREENBOROUGH *relieve herself of the flowers.*] I *never* 'eard such a grand reception!

PETER. [*Who is pinning notes on bouquets in a corner.*] Bet your life! You couldn't beat our gallery!

[*He begins to pin* CAPTAIN JINKS' *notes to the flowers* MRS. GREENBOROUGH *has just brought in.*

MRS. STONINGTON. Good evening, Mrs. Greenborough.

MRS. GREENBOROUGH. [*Turning.*] Oh! You are *here*, my dears; excuse me, I didn't see you! [*Kissing them both.*] Well, what do you think? Did you ever in your life! Wasn't I right, or did I —

[*Interrupted.*

MRS. STONINGTON. No, siree, you didn't

exaggerate one bit! We are going to make a report to the League that her voice is superb.

[MISS MERRIAM *tugs at her elbow.* MRS. STONINGTON *turns.* MISS MERRIAM *makes a few motions.*

MRS. STONINGTON. [*To* MISS MERRIAM.] Yes, dear. [*To* MRS. GREENBOROUGH.] We're going to add to our report that *any one* can go, because no one understands what it's about unless they have an evil mind.

MRS. GREENBOROUGH. Oh, my darlings, I'm so glad you think so; you remember what I told you, — what I always said was —

[*Interrupted.*

MRS. STONINGTON. Yes, indeed, we've been saying it over to ourselves! And do tell me if I've got the neck of my basque too low? I've turned in *three* buttons! I wanted to be real

dressy, but I don't want to catch cold. I wouldn't let Miss Merriam turn hers in, — she's so delicate! I told her she'd look very stylish in her black silk, if she'd put on that pretty bib of hers.

MRS. GREENBOROUGH. You both look very fetching, but I must ask you to come into another room to wait, if you don't mind. Aurelia sent me home first, to see that the guests didn't assemble here. We've taken a little parlor on the other side of the banquet room. She's all upset, poor child, — unstrung! Come this way.

[*Leading them to the double doors.* PETER *gets there first, and takes* MRS. GREENBOROUGH'S *arm and whispers into her ear.*

[MRS. STONINGTON *and* MISS MERRIAM *are trying to read the cards on the different bouquets, etc.*

MRS. GREENBOROUGH. [*Surprised at what* PETER *tells her.*] What! [PETER *nods his head violently.*] You little scamp! You ought to be spanked, and I'd like to do it!

PETER. Oh, would you! I guess you'd have your hands full! Let Miss Mary take them through the other way.

[*Motioning to the hall door.*

[MRS. GREENBOROUGH *gives* PETER *a speaking look, and then turns.*

MRS. GREENBOROUGH. Ladies — Mary will show you into the room through the hall. I will join you presently.

[MARY *goes to the door.* MISS MERRIAM *starts quickly to follow her.*

MRS. STONINGTON. Sophie! Sophie!

[MISS MERRIAM, *of course, does not hear her, and goes on.* MRS. STONINGTON *runs after*

her and catches her at the door. She motions to her to wait. MRS. STONINGTON *then goes to* MRS. GREENBOROUGH *and whispers to her questioningly.*

MRS. GREENBOROUGH. I'll ask her!

MRS. STONINGTON. And do you think she *will?*

MRS. GREENBOROUGH. Yes, she's willing to do just *anything* for friends of mine, no matter *what* it is!

MRS. STONINGTON. [*Hurries to* MISS MERRIAM, *and says delightedly, with very careful enunciation:*] She thinks we *can* kiss her.

[MISS MERRIAM *claps her hands with joy, her face wreathed in smiles, as she and* MRS. STONINGTON *follow* MARY *out into the hall.*

MRS. GREENBOROUGH. [*Turning upon* PETER.] You naughty little boy, you! Why did you let Captain Jinks in there?

PETER. 'Cause he has my sympathies. You don't know all, but *I* do. He went to jail for her sake, and no hero ever done better'n that fur his girl, not even in "The Fireside Companion!"

MRS. GREENBOROUGH. You're out of your head!

PETER. No, I ain't. [*Opening one of the double doors, he whistles.*] Wait and see!

[CAPTAIN JINKS *comes in.*

MRS. GREENBOROUGH. Well, sir, I must say — [*Interrupted.*

CAPTAIN JINKS. Don't! Don't say it! We haven't much time! Persuade Madame Trentoni to see me.

MRS. GREENBOROUGH. Papa Belliarti has told me what you did —

[*Interrupted.*

CAPTAIN JINKS. If I could see her, I could explain.

MRS. GREENBOROUGH. I don't think explaining could do us much good!

CAPTAIN JINKS. Yes, it would, if she loves me.

MRS. GREENBOROUGH. *Loves you? Now!* After that scandalous wager?

CAPTAIN JINKS. Well, then, if she *ever* loved me, if she *ever* loved me — I'm sure I can persuade her.

MRS. GREENBOROUGH. I don't mind telling you, young man, that she *did* love you, — that's the blessed truth! If you could have heard her talk in her sleep as *I* have! Why, only the other afternoon — [*Interrupted.*

CAPTAIN JINKS. She *did* love me?

MRS. GREENBOROUGH. Yes, she did. I don't see any harm in telling that — [*Interrupted.*

CAPTAIN JINKS. [*Suddenly, in outburst of joy, hugs* MRS. GREENBOROUGH, *and kisses her.*] God bless you, Mrs. Gee! God bless you for that!

[PETER *half-enters hurriedly.*

PETER. Psst! [*He sees them embracing.*] Hully gee! [*They separate.*] Say, *which one* is it you're after? [*Laughing.*

CAPTAIN JINKS. [*Laughing.*] Shut up, Peter!

PETER. Well, you'd better get — she's coming.

MRS. GREENBOROUGH. Oh, *do* go! She's in an awful hysterical state. No, not that way!

CAPTAIN JINKS. [*At the double doors.*] Yes, I shall wait here till you bring me word she *will* see me. She *must* see me! Yes, to-night!

MRS. GREENBOROUGH. *No; to-morrow!*

CAPTAIN JINKS. NO; TO-NIGHT! [*He exits.*

MRS. GREENBOROUGH. [*To* PETER.] Take him through into the parlor, where the other guests are assembling; don't let him stay in there. [*Pushing* PETER *out after* CAPTAIN JINKS.] Oh, dear me, what am I to do?

[PROFESSOR BELLIARTI *comes in, and* AURELIA *follows. She is gowned in a billowy mass of white tarlatan, showered over with pink rosebuds, and emphasized here and there with bright green ribbon. Her bustle and train crowd the furniture in the room. A wreath of pink rosebuds is on her head. She carries a cloak and a white lace scarf in her hands, and a bouquet; she throws them away from her, anywhere.* MRS. GREENBOROUGH *runs after her and picks them up.*

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. For just five minutes, Aurelia, come, please!

AURELIA. [*With determination.*] No, Papa, I cannot.

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. [*To* MRS. GREENBOROUGH.] I want her to be present at her supper.

AURELIA. You can make any excuse for me you like!

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. But — my dear child —

AURELIA. I mean it, Papa. I've sung to-night for your sake more than anything else, but I can't do anything more, and it's the last time I'll do that!

MRS. GREENBOROUGH. Aurelia! When you never had so great a triumph!

AURELIA. Triumph? Triumph? Over a few people!

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. *Few* people! Many *hundreds!*

AURELIA. *Hundreds* then! and what do I care? The only triumph I want is denied me, the *triumph of love!* Oh, Papa, you can't understand how I feel, — you're only a *man!* You say the people to-night stood up and shouted themselves hoarse! Did they? I heard nothing but the beating of my poor heart. You say I have been deluged with gifts of flowers, but the only gift I want is missing — one man's honest love! *With that,* to-night *would have been* a triumph! I would have given him my success as my first gift; but without his love, it all means nothing. I don't want success! I don't want anything —

MRS. GREENBOROUGH. Not even any supper?

AURELIA. No, no, ask them to excuse me!

[*She sinks on the piano-stool, buries her face in her arms, and cries. A brass band*

strikes up loudly outside the window, "Hail! the Conquering Hero Comes," and at the same moment PETER *rushes in.*

PETER. Hurrah! There's a big band come to serenade Madame Trentoni. You must go to the window. [*He runs out.*

[PROFESSOR BELLIARTI *opens a window. Loud cries come from the outside* — "Trentoni!", "Trentoni!"

MRS. GREENBOROUGH. [*In great excitement.*] Oh, isn't it beautiful!

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. [*To* AURELIA.] Come, dear. Come and bow to them.

AURELIA. [*Sobbing.*] I can't! I can't!

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. You must! It will anger them.

MRS. GREENBOROUGH. Oh, goodness! You mustn't do that, Aurelia!

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. Nurse your success; it will mean everything.

AURELIA. No!

[*Louder cries again of* "Aurelia!", "Aurelia!" *and* "Trentoni!", *and wilder shouts still outside.* PETER *again runs in.*

PETER. Quick, *please!* Bow at the window! They're beginning to get mad!

[*Again he runs out, shouting.*

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. Come! Come to the window!

[*A few "baas" and hisses are heard; then the shouts and the band stop.*

AURELIA. No! No!

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. Mrs. Gee! Quick, put Aurelia's scarf on your head! [*She does so.*] You must take her place.

MRS. GREENBOROUGH. But do you think we look anything alike?

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. Never mind, it's dark, — they can't distinguish anything! Come on! [*Taking her to the window.*] Bow to them and wave! [*She does so.*] That's it! Again!

[*Great shouts and hurrahs. Cries of* "Trentoni forever!", "God bless you, Aurelia!", *etc. The band plays* "*The Star-Spangled Banner.*" AURELIA *begins to listen and show some interest.*

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. Throw them kisses.

[MRS. GREENBOROUGH *does so. Increased shouts and cries of* "Speech!", "Speech!"

MRS. GREENBOROUGH. [*Laughing excitedly.*] Oh, good gracious! What'll I do now?

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. Speak! Say something!

AURELIA. [*Quickly.*] No! Come away from the window — I'll speak to them. [MRS. GREENBOROUGH *has come away. When she leaves*

the window, the clamor outside hushes disappointedly. AURELIA *takes the lace scarf and goes to the window, really moved, and speaks.*] How good of them! This morning how I should have loved this! [*She reaches the window, and the applause and shouts double, with louder cries of* "Speech," *and the band stops.*] Thank you! [*Hurrahs and bravos very loud outside.*] Thank you all! [*More shouts and greater applause.*] Thank you! [*She throws kisses with both hands, and adds in an excited outburst:*] You're *darlings*, every one of you! [*Tremendous cheers as she leaves the window, and the brass band strikes up "Champagne Charlie." It dies away with the shouts of the crowd outside, as they gradually disperse.* AURELIA *has gone from the window to the piano, and takes up a note there on the flowers. She reads it.*] "I must see you! There

has been a terrible mistake. If you ever loved me, give me an interview."

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. [*Who has followed her, speaks softly over her shoulder.*] Don't trust him.

[AURELIA *continues reading the other notes, and shows on her face her surprise at finding them all the same.*

MRS. GREENBOROUGH. Papa, you go to our guests, and I'll speak to Aurelia.

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. No, *you* go; I have something to say to her.

AURELIA. [*Still reads the notes.*] "I must see you! There is a terrible mistake! If ever you loved me —"

[MRS. GREENBOROUGH *goes out through the double doors.* PETER *comes in, after knocking.*

PETER. Say! General Sherman's just come; and they all want to know where Madame Trentoni is.

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. Mrs. Greenborough has gone to them.

PETER. Hurry up! They're getting mad, and one of them ballet girls — the widder — is hooking oranges from off the table. She says it's for the kid!

[*He exits.*

AURELIA. But these notes are all the same! [*Looking quickly at another.*] The same! —

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. [*Reading one on the centre-table.*] The same! Here, dear, don't read them.

[*Gathering several unread notes into his hands, and crushing them.*

AURELIA. No! No! Papa! [*Taking them*

out of his hands.] Be careful! I *want* to *read* them — every one!

[*A knock is heard on the hall door.*

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. Come in.

AURELIA. Please! I don't want to see any one.

[*The* FOURTH BALLET LADY — MISS HOCHSPITZ — *enters, followed by all the other* BALLET LADIES, *who group themselves in a semicircle behind her.*

FOURTH BALLET LADY. Pardong! I haf com mit ein kleine message from der ballet laties.

[*With a curtsy.*

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. Madame Trentoni is very ill. Worn out with the excitement of her *début.*

FOURTH BALLET LADY. Yah! Das is vat

de old woman dold us, und ve vas all so traublich. I rebresend de 'ole ballet laties ven I com und says dat ve all gif to Madame Drendoni our loaf, und say vat she vas vunderschöne, und der pest singer vat ve has effer tanced mit!

[*Curtsies, and kisses* AURELIA'S *hand.*

[*All the* BALLET LADIES *clap their hands and cry* "Hear! Hear!"

AURELIA. Thank you very much, and all the ladies! I'm sure you all danced very well, too.

FOURTH BALLET LADY. Ve haf madt besser mit our feets ven you haf made so goot mit your mouth!

AURELIA. Thank you again, and I hope you will all enjoy your supper.

FOURTH BALLET LADY. Ve vill *eat* [*the widow here inadvertently claps*], aber not so much ven you vas nicht mit der party. Dis wreat

vas made py our own hands just now, mit schnips from oud of our own bouquets [*giving wreath*] — vat vas gif us py our *sweethearts!*

AURELIA. Thank you.

FOURTH BALLET LADY. Gute nacht! Ve vill all pet our toes you vas de greadest success effer vas! *Gute nacht!*

[*They all curtsy, and turn to go out through the double doors at the back. As they exit,* PETTITOES *and* HOCHSPITZ *embrace, in an excess of good feeling.*

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. Good night.

[*Closing the door behind them.*

AURELIA. You go to the supper, too, dear Papa.

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. No, dearie, I can't leave you.

[*A knock on the hall door.*

AURELIA. [*Again bright and hopeful.*] Maybe that's *he. Come in.* [PETER *enters.*

PETER. This came for you this evening from the Everett House.

[*Giving* AURELIA *an envelope.*

AURELIA. Thank you.

PETER. [*To* PROFESSOR BELLIARTI.] Did you see my hor'shoe? I tell yer!

[*He exits haughtily.*

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. What is that?

AURELIA. Two tickets for the vessel that sails to-morrow for Liverpool.

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. Where did you get them?

AURELIA. I sent for them between the acts, —for Mary and me.

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. [*Sternly.*] *Give* me those tickets!

AURELIA. No!

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. [*Determined.*] I've never coerced you in your life. Have I, dear?

AURELIA. [*As determined.*] No, and I have never disobeyed you, have I?

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. No, and you will not go away to-morrow.

AURELIA. This time, if *you* coerce, *I* disobey.

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. You *can't* go away! What about Mr. Mapleson?

AURELIA. He can send for Adelina Patti! She made a furor here a year or so ago.

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. Adelina Patti isn't *you!*

AURELIA. Oh, well, she's as young as I, and a better singer — if the truth's told.

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. But your contract?

AURELIA. Oh, *hang* my contract!

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. We can't! It'll hang us! Give me those tickets.

AURELIA. [*Holding them up in front of his face.*] In exchange for Captain Jinks — for nothing else!

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. Won't you realize he is unworthy of you?

AURELIA. *He* said so, and I wouldn't believe it, and I shan't believe it when *you* say so, either.

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. Well, we'll go to supper now — we'll talk it over later.

AURELIA. No, I must pack, with Mary; we haven't much time.

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. No; come with me now — you *must.*

AURELIA. I *won't!* There! [*Taking off one of her long curls that hang from the back of her waterfall.*] And there! [*Taking off the other*

curl, and placing both upon the piano.] *Now* will you believe me? [*A knock on the hall door.*] Oh! perhaps that's *he!* Wait a minute, Papa; don't say "come in" yet! [*And she quickly puts back both curls.*] Now! — come in!

[*Pathetically.*

[*The* POLICEMAN, *remembered in Act I, enters with much assurance.*

THE POLICEMAN. Beg pardon, ma'am, but is Captain Jinks here?

AURELIA. [*Echoes, surprised:*] Captain Jinks!

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. Certainly not!

THE POLICEMAN. Well, he was seen coming into the hotel not so long since, and I thought maybe as he was one of the invites at your party —

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. I can assure you that the apartment of Madame Trentoni is the last

place you would find Captain Jinks — that gentleman is no longer our friend.

THE POLICEMAN. Don't say! Well, he's skipped his bail this afternoon, which your Mr. Mapleson put up for him, and he's wanted by the police.

AURELIA. [*Faintly, in astonishment and distress.*] The police? —

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. Why did Mr. Mapleson go bail for him?

THE POLICEMAN. Give it up! Echo answers why!

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. I mean — what's he done? Why —

AURELIA. [*Stops* PROFESSOR BELLIARTI.] Papa! That's not our affair. We have no interest in Captain Jinks' *misdeeds!* [*She turns to the* POLICEMAN.] Good night, sir.

THE POLICEMAN. [*Going, slightly embarrassed.*]

Good night, ma'am. [*He comes back, becoming more and more embarrassed, however.*] Beg pardon, ma'am, I was in the lobby of the Academy, to-night, trying to keep the aisles free, and had to give it up as a bad job! But even with the doors shut, I could hear you — some of them high notes of yourn came clean through the wood! It was *grand!* They fairly put my teeth on edge! The best I ever heard!

AURELIA. [*Half smiling.*] Thank you.

[*Shakes his hand, which makes him very proud.*

THE POLICEMAN. Thank you. Good night, ma'am — good night, sir! [*Bows and exits.*

[AURELIA *and* PROFESSOR BELLIARTI *look at each other a second in silence.*

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. Now you understand Mapleson's knowledge — and you *have* had an escape, my dear!

AURELIA. I don't believe — not even yet. I don't *want* to escape!

[MRS. GREENBOROUGH *returns.*

MRS. GREENBOROUGH. Everybody's arrived, dear heart, so I thought it best for us to come into the supper-room and begin. I hope I haven't gone and — [*Interrupted.*

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. You haven't. You did quite right, Mrs. Gee!

MRS. GREENBOROUGH. Aurelia *won't* come?

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. No. But I'll start things going.

[*They go to the double doors, and* MRS. GREENBOROUGH *exits.* PROFESSOR BELLIARTI, *about to follow, changes his mind, and, closing the door, goes back to* AURELIA. *As* MRS. GREENBOROUGH *exits, the guests in the back room begin to sing "Auld Lang*

Syne," which is heard more faintly when the door is closed. AURELIA *sits on the piano-stool, her head and arms on the piano.*

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. [*Leans over her, and speaks softly.*] Shall I make a little speech for you, dearie, and say you thank them all, and want them to have a happy evening?

[AURELIA, *who cannot speak because of her tears, lifts her head and nods "Yes."* PROFESSOR BELLIARTI *goes into the back room, and the singing is louder as the door opens — till it is shut.* AURELIA, *when she realizes she is alone, takes from the bosom of her dress a white camellia to which is attached a note, which she reads aloud in a pathetic little voice, half crying all through, and breaking down entirely at the end.*

AURELIA. "I must see you — there is a

terrible mistake — if you ever loved me, give me an interview —" [*She cries softly, leaning her head and arms on the piano. She then rises, deliberately, and pulls the bell-cord.*] I'll see him myself. He hasn't had any chance to explain, and I'll give it to him — but I won't make it easy! [PETER *enters in answer to the bell.*

PETER. Yes, ma'am?

AURELIA. Peter, do you want to do me a favor?

PETER. Oh, bet your life!

AURELIA. I'll pay you well.

PETER. No, you *won't!* Not from *you.* Not *this* boy!

AURELIA. I'm afraid it'll be hard for you, but do you think you *could* find Captain Jinks *somewhere,* to-night, and bring him here — without telling any one?

PETER. [*Secretly amused.*] Well — I might *try*

— if you don't mind waiting! Of course, if he's way over to Brooklyn —

AURELIA. I *won't* mind waiting, if you'll only *find* him!

PETER. I guess I'll tell you the truth! [*Delighted.*] He's right *here!*

AURELIA. *Here?*

PETER. Yes, ma'am! He's been in this room. He and I put all them notes on!

AURELIA. You did! You brought him here? You're a dear boy!

[*She kisses his cheek.* PETER, *overcome with joy, pride, and emotion, holds his hand to his cheek.*

PETER. *Oh! Gee!* Thank you! I'll *never wash* that spot!

AURELIA. Now listen! Don't let Captain Jinks know I sent you for him! Pretend I don't know he's here, and just send him in.

PETER. It won't take much *sending*. It's been all I could do to keep him out.

[*He exits.*

AURELIA. Of course he can explain! I knew it, and he's only been waiting for his chance. [*Tears up the steamer tickets.*] But he's got to work for it; he must be punished a little for — something or other! I'm sure I must look a fright, after all I've gone through. [*Standing on the sofa, she looks at herself in the glass over the mantel.*] I'll just put a little dab of powder on —

[*She hurries out through the door, to her bedroom, as* PETER *shows in* CAPTAIN JINKS.

CAPTAIN JINKS. She's not here!

PETER. Oh, I guess she has gone to her room to prink up a little!

CAPTAIN JINKS. For her guests at supper?

PETER. No, she won't join them — it's for *you.*

CAPTAIN JINKS. But she doesn't expect to see me, does she?

PETER. Look here, all's fair in love and war! Guess I'll tell you the truth — *she* sent me after you!

CAPTAIN JINKS. [*Not daring to believe his ears.*] What!

PETER. [*Laughing.*] She told me to try hard to find you; but don't tell — she said to keep "mum"!

CAPTAIN JINKS. Peter, you're an ideal boy — here's a dollar for you!

[*Gives him a bill.*

PETER. Thank you!

[*Exits.*

[*The guests are heard through the double doors,*

singing "Champagne Charlie." AURELIA *re-enters.*

AURELIA. [*Stopping short in an only partially successful effort to simulate surprise.*] Captain Jinks!

CAPTAIN JINKS. Madame!

AURELIA. How dared you come here? Had you sent your card, I should have refused to see you!

[*With great, but not altogether convincing, hauteur.*

CAPTAIN JINKS. And had you sent for me, I should have refused to come!

AURELIA. I *send* for you! Impossible!

CAPTAIN JINKS. At any rate, here I am, and you won't get rid of me until I've straightened everything out. Ever since I left your room this afternoon, I've been searching my brain,

and scouring the town, for proof to show that I have done nothing dishonorable to you; to prove myself worthy at least of your — *respect.*

AURELIA. I do not ask for proofs, but I fear the *police* are not so lenient as a woman.

CAPTAIN JINKS. [*Surprised.*] *The police!*

AURELIA. Yes, the police! They've been here looking for you.

CAPTAIN JINKS. By George, I forgot! At two o'clock I was due. I'll tell you why the police want me —

AURELIA. [*Interrupting.*] Thank you, I don't care to know.

CAPTAIN JINKS. Is that honest?

AURELIA. [*Melting a little.*] No, it's *not* honest. Of course, I'm dying to know!

CAPTAIN JINKS. The day you landed, I gave the Inspector a little bill to go easy with your

trunks, and he gave *me* in charge — that's all! Can't you forgive me if at two o'clock I thought of nothing except that I had lost your love?

AURELIA. Yes, I think I can forgive that —

[*A knock on the hall door.*

CAPTAIN JINKS. Please don't answer it.

AURELIA. Come in!

[PETER *backs into the room.*

CAPTAIN JINKS. [*To* PETER.] What are you doing? Turn around!

PETER. [*Turning.*] That's what I call having tack! [*To* AURELIA.] Them same two lardy-dahs, — are you out as usual?

CAPTAIN JINKS. No! In!

AURELIA. Out!

CAPTAIN JINKS. In!

AURELIA. [*Half angry and half amused at his audacity.*] How dare you? Out!

CAPTAIN JINKS. In!

PETER. Yes, sir.

CAPTAIN JINKS. Show them up.

PETER. Yes, sir.

[*He exits.*

CAPTAIN JINKS. *I sent* for La Martine and Van Vorkenburg, in your name.

AURELIA. *My name?* How dared you!

CAPTAIN JINKS. Oh, it did take a little pluck, but I've so much at stake I must try everything to win.

[*A knock on the hall door.*

CAPTAIN JINKS. Come in.

[CHARLIE *and* GUSSIE *enter.*

CHARLIE. You sent for us, Madame Trentoni?

AURELIA. I did *not!* I wonder at your presumption in appearing here!

CHARLIE. No more presumption in *us* than in Jinks!

CAPTAIN JINKS. It was *I* who sent for you to come, in Madame Trentoni's name.

CHARLIE. What in — what did you do that for?

CAPTAIN JINKS. Because it would be no use explaining about the cursed agreement, and denying things behind your backs. I must do it before your faces and in her presence. I'm not afraid and not ashamed, because I will speak the truth!

CHARLIE. Good!

CAPTAIN JINKS. And I'm going to trust *you* to say what is *true*. I won't believe you two men would be willing to *lie* away the happiness and honor of any one, let alone an old friend.

CHARLIE. Certainly not.

CAPTAIN JINKS. You'll tell the truth about the wager affair?

CHARLIE. Of course.

CAPTAIN JINKS. And you, Gus?

GUSSIE. Why — yes.

CAPTAIN JINKS. This bet, then — did we make it *before we saw her?*

CHARLIE. I don't remember.

CAPTAIN JINKS. And didn't I repudiate it the minute I had seen this lady, as an insult to her?

CHARLIE. No!

CAPTAIN JINKS. *What!*

CHARLIE. *No!*

CAPTAIN JINKS. Good evening. That's all I want out of you!

CHARLIE. What do you mean?

CAPTAIN JINKS. [*Calls.*] Peter!

[PETER *enters and stands by the door.*

CAPTAIN JINKS. Show this gentleman out!

CHARLIE. Look here!

CAPTAIN JINKS. [*Interrupting strongly.*] *Out!*

[CHARLIE *sneers and snaps open his "crush hat" into* CAPTAIN JINKS' *face, and exits, bowed out by* PETER.

CAPTAIN JINKS. Now, Gussie, what do you say? Wasn't that bet made before we'd seen Madame Trentoni?

GUSSIE. No!

CAPTAIN JINKS. [*Calls.*] Peter!

PETER. [*By the door.*] Yes, sir?

CAPTAIN JINKS. [*To* GUSSIE.] Good night! Quick, Peter, this gentleman's in a hurry!

[GUSSIE *seizes a large bouquet, which lies on the table, and smashes it on the floor, and then exits, followed out by* PETER.

CAPTAIN JINKS. Jackasses! I sent for my

friends, hoping they would speak the truth, and exonerate me. Now I must do without them. I did make that bet, but before I saw you.

AURELIA. But you *did make* the bet?

CAPTAIN JINKS. But before I'd seen you. *Before I'd seen you!* And then, only as a joke. I've won your love honestly, and I don't mean to lose it. I've waited until this evening should be over and your triumph won. The evening *is* over and your triumph *is* won! I've allowed Papa Belliarti to blackguard me, the old lady to flout me, *but now it's my turn, and you've got to believe in me!* I won't leave you till you do.

AURELIA. [*Reading his true nature in his face, and convinced by his manly sincerity, begins decidedly to relent.*] What was the old bet, anyway?

CAPTAIN JINKS. That I would get up a flirtation with you.

AURELIA. A flirtation? Is that all? But your friends said —

CAPTAIN JINKS. Oh, well, you know one's *friends* will say anything, — and *such friends!*

AURELIA. And there was nothing about marriage in the bet?

CAPTAIN JINKS. No, nothing so serious as that; and I withdrew the foolish wager as soon as I had seen you.

AURELIA. Did I look so unpromising as all that?

CAPTAIN JINKS. And you meant it this morning when you told me you loved me; didn't you?

AURELIA. [*Softly.*] Yes.

CAPTAIN JINKS. On my soul, you can trust me with your happiness. Forgive me! You *must* forgive me, and *believe* in me.

AURELIA. Is that all?

CAPTAIN JINKS. No! And *love* me!

AURELIA. Oh!

CAPTAIN JINKS. Say it!

AURELIA. I forgive you, I believe in you, and — [*She hesitates.*

CAPTAIN JINKS. And —

AURELIA. And — I —

[*A knock at the door, and the* POLICEMAN *enters suddenly.*

THE POLICEMAN. Ah, ha! *There you are!*

[*He stands and looks at* CAPTAIN JINKS, *triumphantly.*

[*Great consternation on the part of* AURELIA *and* CAPTAIN JINKS.

THE POLICEMAN. I thought I'd catch you near the singing bird's cage!

AURELIA. No, no! [*Going to the* POLICEMAN.] Mr. Policeman, — Captain Jinks *isn't here!*

THE POLICEMAN. Oh, isn't he, ma'am?

AURELIA. [*Very persuasively.*] *No! You* don't see him!

THE POLICEMAN. [*Laughing.*] Oh, don't I?

AURELIA. Couldn't you be just a *little near-sighted*, just to please *me?*

THE POLICEMAN. Couldn't be stone blind, ma'am! — wouldn't be right.

CAPTAIN JINKS. I give you my word of honor I will appear in Court the first thing to-morrow.

AURELIA. And I'll give you *my* word of honor, too. Now, you *don't* see him here, *do you?*

THE POLICEMAN. Meaning no disrespect to you, lady, I can't take his word for it. He skipped his bail!

AURELIA. But *my* word?

THE POLICEMAN. Sorry, but we learned a

passage to Europe was taken in *your name, to-night.* Now, you're singing here all Winter, and have made a P. T. Barnum success, so that there passage can't be for *you*, and we've pretty well twigged to the little game!

AURELIA. Good gracious, what an idea! [*To* CAPTAIN JINKS] Look here, let's tell him the truth!

CAPTAIN JINKS. [*Embarrassed.*] What?

AURELIA. [*Also embarrassed.*] Why — that I — that you —

CAPTAIN JINKS. [*Crossing to the* POLICEMAN, *speaks desperately.*] I'm head over heels in love with her, Officer, and that doesn't half express it —

AURELIA. [*Quickly following* CAPTAIN JINKS, *and taking his arm.*] And we had a quarrel this noon!

CAPTAIN JINKS. [*Quickly.*] I thought I'd lost her, and it drove everything else out of my mind!

AURELIA. [*Quickly.*] And I felt so beastly, I took that passage and was going to sail to-morrow!

CAPTAIN JINKS. Do you believe us?

THE POLICEMAN. I'm thinking —

CAPTAIN JINKS. Sh — he's thinking!

AURELIA. We've made it all up now, and we're going in there *where Mapleson* is.

[*Pointing to the back room.*

CAPTAIN JINKS. And if I'm with *him*, surely you can trust me!

AURELIA. And you have his word of honor. [*To* CAPTAIN JINKS.] Give him your hand.

[CAPTAIN JINKS *does so.*

CAPTAIN JINKS. And *her* word of honor!

AURELIA. Yes, sir! [*Putting her hand on* CAPTAIN JINKS' *and the* POLICEMAN'S. *The* POLICEMAN *is very much embarrassed. They all separate.*] *Do you see Captain Jinks* NOW?

THE POLICEMAN. [*After a look all about the room.*] *Not a sign of him!*

AURELIA. Oh, you darling! [*Seizing* PETER'S *large horseshoe, she loads his arms with it, and he hurries out. She starts to go to* CAPTAIN JINKS, *but* PROFESSOR BELLIARTI *enters from the back room. She rushes to her foster-father and embraces him.*] Those two men *lied* to you! You *must* believe in him — *I do!*

[PROFESSOR BELLIARTI *comes slowly down the room.*

CAPTAIN JINKS. I made no bet about marrying Madame Trentoni, sir. I did make a foolish wager, before seeing her, that I would flirt with

her. After meeting your foster-daughter on the dock, I realized the unworthiness of our wager, and I drew up that I O U to pay up as if I'd lost, so we might call it all off. *She's* forgiven me,—*won't* you?

[PROFESSOR BELLIARTI *looks him, searchingly, straight in the eyes.*

CAPTAIN JINKS. [*Hesitatingly offers his cigar case.*] Have a cigar, sir?

[PROFESSOR BELLIARTI *looks from one to the other, then takes a cigar graciously, and gives* CAPTAIN JINKS *his hand.*

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. Thank you! — And I do gladly take that "blackguard" back!

[AURELIA *starts to embrace him; he eludes her embrace, leaving* CAPTAIN JINKS' *arms to enfold her.*

PROFESSOR BELLIARTI. [*Opening the double*

doors at back.] Ladies and gentlemen, the health and happiness of Captain Jinks and his promised bride!

[*As* PROFESSOR BELLIARTI *gives the toast, all cry* "Hooray!", *and at the same moment* PETER *rushes in with his clothes half torn off his back, but with his horseshoe in his arms.*

PETER. No, he didn't! Not my hor'shoe!

[*And as all the guests, having drunk the toast, begin to sing "Captain Jinks of the Horse Marines,"* AURELIA, *happy and proud on* CAPTAIN JINKS' *arm, goes to join her friends, and the curtain falls.*

END OF THE PLAY

THE CLIMBERS

A PLAY IN FOUR ACTS

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TO

CHARLES T. MATHEWS

IN GRATEFUL RECOGNITION OF HIS
TRUE FRIENDSHIP AND LOYAL ENTHUSIASM
FROM THE BEGINNING

C. F.

THE CLIMBERS

ACT I. In Late Winter.
At the Hunters'.

ACT II. The Following Christmas Eve.
At the Sterlings'.

ACT III. Christmas Day.
At the Hermitage, by the Bronx River.

ACT IV. The Day after Christmas.
At the Sterlings'.

New York: To-day

THE PEOPLE IN THE PLAY

RICHARD STERLING.
EDWARD WARDEN.
FREDERICK MASON.
JOHNNY TROTTER.
GODESBY.
DR. STEINART.
RYDER.
SERVANT *at the Hermitage.*
JORDAN. *Butler at the Sterlings'.*
LEONARD. *Footman at the Sterlings'.*
MASTER STERLING.
SERVANTS.

MRS. STERLING (*née Blanche Hunter*).
MISS HUNTER.
MRS. HUNTER.
JESSICA HUNTER.
CLARA HUNTER.
MISS GODESBY.
MISS SILLERTON.
TOMPSON. *Mrs. Hunter's Maid.*
MARIE. *Clara Hunter's Maid.*

Originally produced at the Bijou Theatre, New York, January 21, 1901, with the following cast:—

Richard Sterling	Mr. Frank Worthing
Edward Warden	Mr. Robert Edeson
Frederick Mason	Mr. John Flood
Johnny Trotter	Mr. Ferdinand Gottschalk
Dr. Steinart	Mr. George C. Boniface
Godesby	Mr. J. B. Sturges
Ryder	Mr. Kinard
Servant at the Hermitage	Mr. Henry Warwick
Jordan, Leonard, A Footman — Servants at the Hunters'	Mr. Edward Moreland; Mr. Henry Stokes; Mr. Frederick Wallace
Richard Sterling, Jr.	Master Harry Wright

Mrs. Hunter	Mrs. Madge Carr Cook
Mrs. Sterling (*née* Blanche Hunter)	Miss Amelia Bingham
Jessica Hunter	Miss Maud Monroe
Clara Hunter	Miss Minnie Dupree
Miss Hunter	Miss Annie Irish
Miss Godesby	Miss Clara Bloodgood
Miss Sillerton	Miss Ysobel Haskins
Tompson, Marie — Maids at the Hunters'	Miss Lillian Eldredge; Miss Florence Lloyd

Produced at the Comedy Theatre, London, September 5, 1903, with the following cast:—

Richard Sterling	Mr. Sydney Valentine
Edward Warden	Mr. Reeves-Smith
Frederick Mason	Mr. J. L. Mackay
Johnny Trotter	Mr. G. M. Graham
Godesby	Mr. Horace Pollock
Dr. Steinart	Mr. Howard Sturges
Master Sterling	Miss Maidie Andrews
Ryder	Mr. Henry Howard
Jordan	Mr. Elgar B. Payne
Leonard	Mr. Littledale Power
Footman	Mr. Rivers Bertram
Servant	Mr. George Aubrey
Mrs. Sterling	Miss Lily Hanbury
Miss Hunter	Miss Kate Tyndall
Mrs. Hunter	Miss Lottie Venne
Jessica Hunter	Miss Alma Mara
Clara Hunter	Mrs. Mouillot
Miss Sillerton	Miss Florence Sinclair
Tompson	Miss L. Crauford
Marie	Miss Armstrong
Miss Godesby	Miss Fannie Ward

ACT I

A drawing-room at the Hunters', handsomely and artistically furnished. The woodwork and furniture are in the period of Louis XVI. The walls and furniture are covered with yellow brocade, and the curtains are of the same golden material. At the back are two large windows which give out on Fifth Avenue, opposite the Park, the trees of which are seen across the way. At Left is a double doorway, leading into the hall. At Right, opposite, is a door which leads to other rooms, and thence to other parts of the house. In the centre, at back, between the two windows, is the fireplace; on the mantel are two vases and a clock in dark blue

ormolu. There is a white and gold piano on the Right side of the room. The room suggests much wealth, and that it has been done by a professional decorator; the personal note of taste is lacking.

It is four o'clock in the afternoon. The shades of the windows are drawn down. There are rows and rows of camp-chairs filling the entire room. The curtain rises slowly. After a moment, JORDAN, *the butler, and* LEONARD, *a footman, enter from the Left and begin to gather together and carry out the camp-chairs. They do this with very serious faces, and take great pains to step softly and to make no noise. They enter a second time for more chairs.*

JORDAN. [*Whispers to* LEONARD.] When are they coming for the chairs?

LEONARD. [*Whispers back.*] To-night. Say, it was fine, wasn't it!

JORDAN. Grand!

[*They go out with the chairs and immediately reënter for more. They are followed in this time by a lady's maid,* TOMPSON; *she is not a young woman. As she crosses the room she stoops and picks up a faded flower which has fallen from some emblem. She goes to the window at Right, and peeps out. She turns around and looks at the others. They all speak in subdued voices.*

TOMPSON. Jordan, what do you think — can we raise the shades now?

JORDAN. Yes, of course — after they've left the house it's all over as far as we here are concerned.

[*She raises both shades.*

TOMPSON. Phew! what an odor of flowers!

[*She opens one of the windows a little.*

[MARIE, *a young, pretty, French woman, enters from the Right.*

MARIE. Will I help you?

TOMPSON. Just with this table, thank you, Marie. [*They begin to rearrange the room, putting it in its normal condition. They replace the table and put back the ornaments upon it.*] Poor Mr. Hunter, and him so fond of mince pie. I shall never forget how that man ate mince pie.

[*She sighs lugubriously and continues her labor with the room.*

LEONARD. I hope as how it's not going to make any difference with us.

JORDAN. [*Pompously.*] Of course not; wasn't Mr. Hunter a millionnaire?

TOMPSON. Some millionnaires I've known

turned out poor as Job's turkey in their coffins!

MARIE. What you say? You tink we shall 'ave some of madame's or ze young ladies' dresses?

TOMPSON. [*Hopefully.*] Perhaps.

MARIE. I 'ave already made my choice. I like ze pale pink of Mees Jessie.

LEONARD. Sh! I heard a carridge.

TOMPSON. Then they're coming back.

[MARIE *quickly goes out Right.*

JORDAN. [*To* LEONARD, *hurriedly, as he quickly goes out Left.*] Take them last two chairs!

[LEONARD, *with the chairs, follows* JORDAN *out Left.* TOMPSON *hastily puts back a last arm-chair to its usual position in the room and goes out Right.* MRS. HUNTER *enters Left, followed by her three daughters,* BLANCHE, JESSICA, *and* CLARA, *and* MASTER STERLING, *who is*

a small, attractive child, five years of age. All are in the deepest conventional mourning, MRS. HUNTER *in widow's weeds and* CLARA *with a heavy, black chiffon veil; the* BOY *is also dressed in conventional mourning. As soon as they enter, all four women lift their veils.* MRS. HUNTER *is a well-preserved woman, with a pretty, rather foolish, and somewhat querulous face. Her figure is the latest mode.* BLANCHE STERLING, *her oldest daughter, is her antithesis, — a handsome, dignified woman, young, sincere, and showing, in her attitude to the others and in her own point of view, the warmth of a true, evenly-balanced nature.* JESSICA *is a typical second child, — nice, good, self-effacing, sympathetic, unspoiled.* CLARA *is her opposite, — spoiled, petulant, pretty, pert, and selfish.*

MRS. HUNTER. [*With a long sigh.*] Oh, I am so glad to be back home and the whole thing over without a hitch!

[*She sinks with a great sigh of relief into a big chair.*

BLANCHE. [*Takes her son to* MRS. HUNTER.] Kiss grandmother good-by, and then Leonard will take you home.

MRS. HUNTER. Good-by, dear. Be a good boy. Don't eat too much candy.

[*Kisses him carelessly.*

MASTER STERLING. Good-by. [*Runs towards the door Left, shouting happily.*] Leonard! Leonard!

MRS. HUNTER. [*Tearfully.*] My dears, it was a great success! Everybody was there!

[*The three younger women stand and look about the room, as if it were strange to them — as if it were empty. There is a moment's silence.*

BLANCHE. [*Tenderly.*] Mother, why don't you take off your bonnet?

MRS. HUNTER. Take it off for me; it *will* be a great relief.

BLANCHE. Help me, Jess.

MRS. HUNTER. [*Irritably.*] Yes, *do* something, Jessie. You've mortified me terribly to-day! That child hasn't shed a tear. People'll think you didn't love your father. [*The two are taking off* MRS. HUNTER'S *bonnet.* MRS. HUNTER *waits for an answer from* JESSICA; *none comes.*] I never saw any one so heartless! [*Tearful again.*] And her father adored her. *She* was one of the things we quarrelled *most* about!

[*Over* MRS. HUNTER'S *head* BLANCHE *exchanges a sympathetic look with* JESSICA *to show she understands.*

CLARA. I'm sure *I've* cried enough. I've cried buckets.

[*She goes to* MRS. HUNTER *as* BLANCHE *and* JESSICA *take away the bonnet and veil and put them on the piano.*

MRS. HUNTER. [*Kissing Clara.*] Yes, dear, you are your mother's own child. And *you* lose the most by it, too.

[*Leaning against the side of her mother's chair, with one arm about her mother.*

CLARA. Yes, indeed, instead of coming out next month, and having a perfectly lovely winter, I'll have to mope the whole season, and, if I don't look out, be a wallflower without ever having been a bud!

MRS. HUNTER. [*Half amused but feeling* CLARA'S *remark is perhaps not quite the right thing.*] Sh—

[*During* CLARA'S *speech above,* BLANCHE *has*

taken JESSICA *in her arms a moment and kissed her tenderly, slowly. They rejoin* MRS. HUNTER, BLANCHE *wiping her eyes,* JESSICA *still tearless.*

CLARA. And think of all the clothes we brought home from Paris last month!

MRS. HUNTER. My dear, don't think of clothes — think of your poor father! That street dress of mine will dye very well, and we'll give the rest to your aunt and cousins.

BLANCHE. Mother, don't you want to go upstairs?

JESSICA. [*Sincerely moved.*] Yes, I hate this room now.

MRS. HUNTER. [*Rising.*] Hate this room! When we've just had it done! Louis Kinge!

BLANCHE. Louis *Quinze*, dear! She means the associations now, mother.

MRS. HUNTER. Oh, yes, but that's weak and

foolish, Jessie. No, Blanche — [*Sitting again.*] — I'm too exhausted to move. Ring for tea.

[BLANCHE *rings the bell beside the mantel.*

CLARA. [*Crossing to piano, forgets and starts to play a music-hall song, but* MRS. HUNTER *stops her.*] Oh, yes, tea! I'm starved!

MRS. HUNTER. Clara, darling! As if you could be hungry at such a time!

[JORDAN *enters Left.*

BLANCHE. Tea, Jordan.

JORDAN. Yes, madam.

[*He goes out Left.*

MRS. HUNTER. Girls, everybody in town was there! I'm sure even your father himself couldn't have complained.

BLANCHE. Mother!

MRS. HUNTER. Well, you know he always found fault with my *parties* being too mixed. He

wouldn't realize I couldn't throw over all my old set when I married into his, — not that I ever acknowledged I was your father's inferior. I consider my family was just as good as his, only we were *Presbyterians!*

BLANCHE. Mother, dear, take off your gloves.

MRS. HUNTER. I thought I had. [*Crying.*] I'm so heartbroken I don't know what I'm doing.

[*Taking off her gloves.*

[BLANCHE *and* CLARA *comfort their mother.*

JESSICA. Here's the tea —

[JORDAN *and* LEONARD *enter with large, silver tray, with tea, cups, and thin bread-and-butter sandwiches. They place them on small tea-table which* JESSICA *arranges for them.*

MRS. HUNTER. I'm afraid I can't touch it.

[*Taking her place behind tea-table and biting eagerly into a sandwich.*

JESSICA. [*Dryly.*] Try.

[BLANCHE *pours tea for them all, which they take in turn.*

MRS. HUNTER. [*Eating.*] One thing I was furious about, — did you see the Witherspoons *here* at the house?

CLARA. *I* did.

MRS. HUNTER. The idea! When I've never called on them. They are the worst social pushers I've ever known.

[*She takes another sandwich.*

CLARA. Trying to make people think they are on our visiting list! Using even a funeral to get in!

MRS. HUNTER. But I *was* glad the Worthings were here, and I thought it *sweet* of old Mr. Dormer to go even to the cemetery. [*Voice breaks a little.*] He never goes to balls any more, and, they say, catches cold at the slightest change of temperature

[*She takes a third sandwich.*

BLANCHE. A great many people loved father.

MRS. HUNTER. [*Irritably.*] They ought to've. It was really foolish the way he was always doing something for somebody! How good these sandwiches are! [*Spoken very plaintively.*

JESSICA. Shall we have to economize now, mother?

MRS. HUNTER. Of course not; how dare you suggest such an injustice to your *father*, and *before* the flowers are withered on his grave!

[*Again becoming tearful.*

[JORDAN *enters Left with a small silver tray, heaping full of letters.*

Has the new writing paper come?

BLANCHE. [*Who takes the letters and looks through them, giving some to her mother.*] Yes.

[BLANCHE *reads a letter, and passes it to* JESSICA.

MRS. HUNTER. Is the black border broad enough? They said it was the thing.

CLARA. If you had it any broader, you'd have to get white ink to write with!

MRS. HUNTER. [*Sweetly.*] Don't be impertinent, darling!

[*Reading another letter.*

[*Enter* MISS RUTH HUNTER. *She is an unmarried woman between thirty and forty years of age, handsome, distinguished; an aristocrat, without any pretensions; simple, unaffected, and direct in her effort to do kindnesses where they are not absolutely undeserved. She enters the room as if she carried with her an atmosphere of pure ozone. This affects all those in it. She is dressed in deep mourning and wears a thick chiffon veil, which she removes as she enters.*

RUTH. Oh! you're having tea!

[*Glad that they are.*

MRS. HUNTER. [*Taking a second cup.*] I thought the children *ought* to.

RUTH. Of course they ought and so ought you, if you haven't.

MRS. HUNTER. Oh, I've *trifled* with something.

JESSICA. Sit here, Aunt Ruth.

BLANCHE. Will you have a cup, Aunt Ruth?

RUTH. Yes, dear, I'm feeling very hungry.

[*Sitting on the sofa beside* JESSICA *and pressing her hand as she does so.*

MRS. HUNTER. Hungry! *How can you!*

RUTH. Because I'm not a *hypocrite!*

MRS. HUNTER. [*Whimpering.*] I suppose that's a slur at me!

RUTH. If the slipper fits! But I confess I haven't eaten much for several days; I couldn't

touch anything this morning, and I begin to feel exhausted; I must have food and, thank Heaven, I want it. Thank you.

[*To* BLANCHE, *taking the cup from her.*

MRS. HUNTER. I think it's awful, Ruth, and I feel I have a right to say it — I think you owed it to my feelings to have worn a long veil; people will think you didn't love your brother.

RUTH. [*Dryly.*] Will they? Let them! You know as well as I do that George loathed the very idea of crêpe and all display of mourning.

MRS. HUNTER. [*Feeling out of her element, changes the subject.*] You stayed behind?

RUTH. Yes. I wanted to be the last there. [*Her voice chokes; she tries to control herself.*] Ah! you see my nerves are all gone to pieces. I *won't* cry any more!

MRS. HUNTER. I don't see how you could

bear it — staying; but you never had any heart Ruth.

RUTH. [*Mechanically, biting her lips hard to keep the tears back.*] Haven't I?

MRS. HUNTER. My darling husband always felt that defect in you.

RUTH. George?

MRS. HUNTER. He resented your treatment of me, and often said so.

RUTH. [*Very quietly, but with determination.*] Please be careful. Don't talk to me like this about my brother, Florence — or you'll make me say something I shall be sorry for.

MRS. HUNTER. I don't care! It wore on him, the way you treated me. I put up with it for his sake, but it helped undermine his health.

RUTH. Florence, stop!

MRS. HUNTER. [*In foolish anger, the resentment*

of years bursting out.] I *won't* stop! I'm alone now, and the least you can do is to see that people who've fought shy of me take me up and give me my due. You've been a cruel, selfish sister-in-law, and your own brother saw and hated you for it!

BLANCHE. *Mother!*

RUTH. [*Outraged.*] Send your daughters out of the room; I wish to answer you alone.

MRS. HUNTER. [*Frightened.*] No! what you have to say to me I prefer my children to hear!

[CLARA *comes over to her mother and puts her arm about her.*

RUTH. I can't remain quiet any longer. George — [*She almost breaks down, but she controls herself.*] This funeral is enough, with its show and worldliness! I don't believe there was a soul in the church you didn't see! Look at your handkerchief!

Real grief isn't measured by the width of a black border. I'm ashamed of you, Florence! I never liked you very much, although I tried to for your husband's sake, but now I'm even more ashamed of you. My dear brother is gone, and there need be no further bond between us, but I want you to understand the true reason why, from to-day, I keep away from you. This funeral was revolting to me!—a show spectacle, a social function, and for *him* who you know *hated* the very thing. [*She stops a moment to control her tears and her anger.*] I saw the reporters there, and I heard your message to them, and I contradicted it. I begged them not to use your information, and they were gentlemen and promised me not to. You are, and always have been, a silly, frivolous woman. I don't doubt you loved your husband as much as you could any man, but it wasn't enough for me;

he was worth being adored by the best and noblest woman in the world. I've stood by all these years, trying with my love and silent sympathy to be some comfort to him — but I saw the disappointment and disillusionment eat away the very *hope* of happiness out of his heart. I tried to help him by helping you in your foolish ambitions, doing what I could to give my brother's wife the social position *his name* entitled her to!

MRS. HUNTER. That's not true; I've had to fight it out all alone!

RUTH. It was not my fault if my best friends found you intolerable; *I* couldn't blame them. Well, now it's over! George is at rest, please God. You are a rich woman to do what you please. Go, and do it! and Heaven forgive you for ruining my brother's life! I'm sorry to have said all this before your children. Blanche, you

know how dearly I love you, and I hope you have forgiven me by now for my opposition to your marriage.

BLANCHE. Of course I've forgiven you, but you were always unjust to Dick.

RUTH. Yes; I didn't like your husband then, and I didn't believe in him, but I like him better now. And I am going to put all my affairs in his hands. I couldn't show — surely — a better proof of confidence and liking than that: to trust him as I did — your father. I hope I shall see much of you and Jessica. As for you, Clara, I must be honest —

CLARA. [*Interrupting her.*] Oh, I know you've always hated me! The presents you gave the other girls were always twice as nice as I got!

MRS. HUNTER. [*Sympathetically.*] Come here, darling.

[CLARA *goes and puts her arms about her mother's neck.*

RUTH. You are your mother's own child, Clara, and I never could pretend anything I didn't feel. [*She turns to* BLANCHE *and* JESSICA, *who stand side by side.*] You two are all I have left in the world of my brother. [*She kisses them, and lets the tears come, this time without struggling.*] Take pity on your old-maid aunt and come and see me, won't you, *often* — [*Trying to smile away her tears.*] And now good-by!

JESSICA AND RUTH. [*Taking her hands.*] Good-by.

[RUTH *looks about the room to say good-by to it; she cries and hurriedly begins pulling down her veil, and starts to go out as* JORDAN *enters Left and announces "Mr. Mason!"*

[MRS. HUNTER *fluffs her hair a little and hopes she looks becoming.*

[MASON *is a typical New Yorker, well built, well preserved, dignified, and good-looking, — a solid man in every sense of the word.*

MASON. [*Meeting* RUTH, *shakes hands with her.*] Miss Hunter.

RUTH. I am just going, Mr. Mason.

MASON. You must stay. I sent word to your house this morning to meet me here.

[*Shakes hands with the others.*

RUTH. I was here all night.

MRS. HUNTER. Will you have some tea? The children were hungry.

MASON. No, thank you. [*To* BLANCHE.] Isn't your husband here?

[JORDAN, *at a signal from* MRS. HUNTER, *removes the tea things.*

BLANCHE. No, he left us at the door when we came back.

MASON. Didn't he get a letter from me this morning asking him to meet me here?

BLANCHE. Oh, yes, he did mention a letter at breakfast, but my thoughts were away. He has been very much worried lately over his affairs; he doesn't confide in me, but I see it. I wish you could advise him, Mr. Mason.

MASON. I cannot advise your husband if he won't *ask* my advice. I don't think we'll wait for Mr. Sterling.

[*Gives chair to* MRS. HUNTER.

MRS. HUNTER. I suppose you've come about all the horrid business. Why not just tell us how much our income is, and let all the details go. I really think the details are more than I can bear to-day.

MASON. That can be certainly as you wish; but I felt — as your business adviser — and besides I promised my old friend, your husband — it was my duty to let you know how matters stand with the least possible delay.

MRS. HUNTER. [*Beginning to break down.*] George! George!

[RUTH *looks at her, furious, and bites her lips hard.* JESSICA *is standing with her back toward them.*

MASON. Well, then —

[*He is interrupted by* MRS. HUNTER, *who sees* JESSICA.

MRS. HUNTER. Jess! How rude you are! Turn around this minute! [JESSICA *does not move.*] What do you mean! Excuse me, Mr. Mason! Jess! Such disrespect to your father's will! Turn around! [*Angry.*] Do you hear me?

JESSICA. [*With her back still turned, her shoulders shaking, speaks in a voice broken with sobs.*] Leave me alone! Leave me alone —

[*She sits in a chair beside her and leans her arms upon its back and buries her face in her arms.*

BLANCHE. [*With her hand on her mother's arm.*] Mother! Don't worry her!

MRS. HUNTER. Go on, please, Mr. Mason, and remember, *spare us the details.* What is our income?

MASON. Mrs. Hunter, there is no income.

MRS. HUNTER. [*Quietly, not at all grasping what he means.*] No income! How is our money —

MASON. I am sorry to say there is *no* money.

MRS. HUNTER. [*Echoes weakly.*] No money?

MASON. Not a penny!

MRS. HUNTER. [*Realizing now what he means, cries out in a loud, hard, amazed voice.*] *What!*

BLANCHE. [*With her hand on her shoulder.*] Mother!

MRS. HUNTER. I don't believe it!

RUTH. [*To* MASON.] My good friend, do you mean that literally — that my brother died without leaving *any* money behind him?

MRS. HUNTER. For his wife and family?

MASON. I mean just that.

RUTH. But how?

MRS. HUNTER. Yes, *tell us the details* — every one of them! You can't imagine the shock this is to me!

MASON. Hunter sent for me two days before he died, and told me things had gone badly with him last year, but it seemed impossible to retrench his expenses.

RUTH. *Are you listening, Florence?*

MRS. HUNTER. Yes, of course I am; your brother was a very extravagant man!

MASON. This year, with his third daughter coming out, there was need of more money than ever. He was harassed nearly to death with financial worries. [RUTH *begins to cry softly.* MRS. HUNTER *gets angrier and angrier.*] And finally, in sheer desperation, and trusting to the advice of the Storrings, he risked everything he had with them in the Consolidated Copper. The day after, he was taken ill. You know what happened. The Storrings, Hunter, and others were ruined absolutely; the next day Hunter died.

RUTH. Poor George! Why didn't he come to me; he must have known that everything I had was his!

MASON. He was too ill when the final blow came to realize it.

MRS. HUNTER. [*Angry.*] But his *life insurance*, — there was a big policy in my name.

MASON. He had been obliged to let that lapse.

MRS. HUNTER. You mean I haven't even my *life* insurance?

MASON. As I said, there is nothing, except this house, and that is —

MRS. HUNTER. [*Rises indignantly and almost screams in angry hysterics.*] *Mortgaged*, I presume! Oh, it's insulting! It's an indignity. It's — it's — Oh, well, it's just like my husband, there!

BLANCHE. Mother!

[RUTH *rises, and, taking* MASON'S *arm, leads him aside.*

MRS. HUNTER. [*To* BLANCHE.] Oh, don't talk to me now! You always preferred your father,

and now you're punished for it! He has wilfully left your mother and sisters paupers!

BLANCHE. How can you speak like that! Surely you know father must have suffered more than we could when he realized he was leaving nothing for you.

JESSICA. Yes, and it was for us too that he lost all. It was our extravagance.

MRS. HUNTER. Hush! How dare *you* side against me, too?

RUTH. Florence —

MRS. HUNTER. Well, Ruth, what do you think of your brother now?

BLANCHE. [*To her mother.*] Don't!

MASON. By whom were the arrangements for to-day made?

MRS. HUNTER. My son-in-law had most pressing business, and his friend —

BLANCHE. The friend of all of us —

MRS. HUNTER. Yes, of course, Mr. Warden saw to everything.

BLANCHE. He will be here any moment!

MASON. When he comes, will you send him on to me, please?

RUTH. Yes.

MASON. Very well. Good-by. [*Shakes hands with* BLANCHE.] I am very sorry to have been the bearer of such bad news.

MRS. HUNTER. [*Shaking hands with him.*] Please overlook anything I may have said; at such a moment, with the loss of all my money — and my dear husband — I don't know *what* to say!

MASON. Naturally. [*To the others.*] Good-by. [*To* RUTH, *who follows him.*] I'll come to see you in the morning.

[*As they shake hands.*

RUTH. And I can then tell you what I settle here now. [MASON *goes out Left.*] Florence, I'm very sorry —

[*Interrupted.*

MRS. HUNTER. Oh! *You!* Sorry!

RUTH. Yes, very, very sorry, — first, that I spoke as I did just now.

MRS. HUNTER. It's too late to be sorry for that now.

RUTH. No, it isn't, and I'll prove to you I mean it. Come, we'll talk things over.

MRS. HUNTER. Go away! I don't want you to prove anything to me! [MRS. HUNTER *and* CLARA *sit side by side on the soja.* BLANCHE *and* JESSICA *are in chairs near the table.* RUTH *sits beside* BLANCHE. MRS. HUNTER *has something the manner of porcupines and shows a set determination to accept nothing by way of comfort*

or expedient. BLANCHE *looks hopeful and ready to take the helm for the family.* JESSICA *will back up* BLANCHE.] My happiness in this world is over. What have I to live for?

RUTH. Your children!

MRS. HUNTER. Beggars like myself!

BLANCHE. But your children will work for you.

CLARA. Work! I see myself.

RUTH. So do I.

MRS. HUNTER. My children work! Don't be absurd!

JESSICA. It is not absurd! I can certainly earn my own living somehow and so can Clara.

CLARA. Doing *what*, I should like to know! I see myself!

BLANCHE. Jess is right. I'll take care of this family — father always said I was "his own child." I'll do my best to take his place.

RUTH. I will gladly give Jessica a home.

MRS. HUNTER. [*Whimpers.*] You'd rob me of my children, too!

JESSICA. Thank you, Aunt Ruth, but I must stay with mother and be Blanche's right-hand man!

CLARA. I might go on the stage.

MRS. HUNTER. My dear, smart people don't any more.

CLARA. I'd like to be a sort of Anna Held.

JESSICA. I don't see why I couldn't learn typewriting, Blanche?

MRS. HUNTER. Huh! Why, you could never even learn to play the piano ; I don't think you'd be much good at typewriting.

CLARA. You want to be a typewriter, because in the papers they always have an old gentleman taking them to theatres and supper! No, sir, if

there is to be any "old man's darling" in this family, *I'll* be *it!*

RUTH. [*Dryly.*] You'll have to learn to spell correctly first!

CLARA. [*Superciliously.*] Humph!

JESSICA. There are lots of ways nowadays for women to earn their living.

RUTH. Yes, typewriting we will consider.

MRS. HUNTER. Never!

[*No one pays any attention to her except* CLARA, *who agrees with her.*

RUTH. Jess, you learned enough to *teach*, didn't you? — even at that fashionable school your mother sent you to?

JESSICA. Oh, yes, I think I could teach.

MRS. HUNTER. Never!

[*Still no one pays any attention except* CLARA *who again agrees with her.*

CLARA. No, indeed! *I* wouldn't teach!

BLANCHE. If we only knew some nice elderly woman who wanted a companion, Jess would be a godsend.

CLARA. If she was a nice *old* lady with lots of money and delicate health, I wouldn't mind that position myself.

RUTH. Clara, you seem to take this matter as a supreme joke!

MRS. HUNTER. [*With mock humility.*] May *I* speak? [*She waits. All turn to her. A moment's silence.*] MAY I speak?

RUTH. Yes, yes. Go on, Florence; don't you see we're listening?

MRS. HUNTER. I didn't know! I've been so completely ignored in this entire conversation. But there is one thing for the girls — the easiest possible way for them to earn their living —

which you don't seem for a moment to have thought of!

[*She waits with a smile of coming triumph on her face.*

RUTH. Nursing!

MRS. HUNTER. [*Disgusted.*] No!

CLARA. Manicuring?

MRS. HUNTER. *Darling!*

BLANCHE. Designing dresses and hats?

MRS. HUNTER. No!

JESSICA. Book-keeping?

MRS. HUNTER. No.

RUTH. Then what in the world is it?

MRS. HUNTER. Marriage!

CLARA. Oh, of course!

RUTH. Humph!

[JESSICA *and* BLANCHE *exchange glances.*

MRS. HUNTER. That young Mr. Trotter would be a fine catch for Jess.

JESSICA. Who loathes him!

MRS. HUNTER. Don't be old-fashioned! He's very nice.

RUTH. A little cad, trying to get into society — nice occupation for a *man!*

JESSICA. Mother, you can't be serious.

CLARA. Why wouldn't he do for *me?*

RUTH. He *would!* The very thing!

MRS. HUNTER. We'll see, darling; I think Europe is the place for you. I don't believe all the titles are gobbled up yet.

RUTH. Jess, I might get you some women friends of mine, to whom you could go mornings and answer their letters.

MRS. HUNTER. I should not allow my daughter to go in that capacity to the house of any woman who had refused to call on her mother, which is the way most of your friends have treated me

RUTH. Do you realize, Florence, this is a question of bread and butter, a practical suggestion of life, which has nothing whatever to do with the society columns of the daily papers?

MRS. HUNTER. I do *not* intend that my daughters shall lose their positions because their father has been — what shall we call it — criminally negligent of them.

RUTH. [*Rising.*] How dare you! You are to blame for it all. If you say another word injurious to my brother's memory, I'll leave this house and let you starve for all I'll do for you.

BLANCHE. Aunt Ruth, please, for father's sake —

CLARA. Well, this house is ours, anyway!

BLANCHE. That is what *I've* been thinking of. The house is yours. It's huge. You don't need it. You must either give it up altogether —

MRS. HUNTER. [*Interrupts.*] *What! Leave it. My house! Never!*

BLANCHE. Or — let out floors to one or two friends, — bachelor friends. Mr. Mason, perhaps —

CLARA. [*Interrupts, rising, furious.*] Take in *boarders!*

MRS. HUNTER. [*Who has listened aghast, now rises in outraged dignity; she stands a moment glaring at* BLANCHE, *then speaks.*] Take — [*She chokes.*] *That* is the *last straw!*

[*And she sweeps from the room Right.*

CLARA. Mama! Mama!

[*She goes out after her mother.*

[*The other three women watch the two leave the room, then turn and look at each other.*

BLANCHE. We'll manage somehow, only I think it would be easier for us to discuss all practical matters by *ourselves.*

RUTH. And I want you to understand this, girls, — I represent your dear father ; half of everything I have is yours, and you must promise me always to come to me for everything.

[STERLING *enters suddenly Left.*

[*He is a man of thirty-eight or forty, a singularly attractive personality; he is handsome and distinguished. His hair is grayer than his years may account for and his manner betrays a nervous system overtaxed and barely under control. At the moment that he enters he is evidently laboring under some especial, and only half-concealed, nervous strain. In spite of his irritability at times with his wife, there is an undercurrent of tenderness which reveals his real love for* BLANCHE.

STERLING. Oh, you're all here! Have I missed old Mason?

RUTH. Yes, but Blanche will tell you what he had to say. I'm going upstairs to try and pacify your mother. We mustn't forget she has a hard time ahead of her.

[*She goes out Right with* JESSICA.

STERLING. I suppose Mason came about the will and your father's affairs?

BLANCHE. Yes, you ought to have been here.

STERLING. [*Irritably.*] But I couldn't—I told you I couldn't!

BLANCHE. Do you realize, dear, that you haven't been able to do *anything for me* for a long time? Lately, even I hardly ever *see* you — I stay home night after night alone.

STERLING. That's your own fault, dear; Ned Warden's always ready to take you anywhere you like.

BLANCHE. [*With the ghost of a jest.*] But do you

think it's quite right for me to take up all Mr. Warden's time?

STERLING. Why not, if he likes it?

BLANCHE. And don't you think people will soon talk?

STERLING. Darling! People always talk, and who cares!

BLANCHE. It's months since you showed me any sign of affection, and now when my heart is hungrier than ever for it, — you know how I loved my father, — I long for sympathy from *you*, and you haven't once thought to take me, your wife, in your arms and hold me close and comfort me.

STERLING. I'm sorry, old girl, I'm really sorry. [*Embracing her affectionately.*] And surely you know I don't love any other woman in the world but you. [*He kisses her.*] It's only because I've been terribly worried. I don't want to bother you

with business, but I've been in an awful hole for money. I tried to make a big coup in Wall Street the other day and only succeeded getting in deeper, and for the last few days I've been nearly distracted.

BLANCHE. Why didn't you tell me?

STERLING. I thought I'd get out of it with this Consolidated Copper without worrying you.

BLANCHE. You were in that, too?

STERLING. How do you mean I, "too"?

BLANCHE. Mr. Mason has just told us *father* lost everything in it.

STERLING. [*Aghast.*] You don't mean your father hasn't left any money?

BLANCHE. Nothing.

STERLING. [*Forgetting everything but what this means to him.*] Nothing! But I was counting on your share to save me! What did the damned old fool mean?

BLANCHE. Dick!

STERLING. Forgive me, I didn't mean to say that.

BLANCHE. Oh, *who are you! What* are you! You are not the man I thought when I married you! Every day something new happens to frighten me, to threaten my love for you!

STERLING. No, no, don't say that, old girl.

[*He tries to take her hand.*

BLANCHE. What right have you to criticise my father, to curse him — and to-day!

STERLING. I don't know what I'm saying, Blanche. Try to forgive me. I wouldn't have thought of such a thing as his money to-day if it wasn't the only thing that can save me from — disgrace.

[*His voice sinking almost to a whisper and the man himself sinking into a chair*

BLANCHE. Disgrace! How? What disgrace?

[*Going to him.*

STERLING. I can't explain it; you wouldn't understand.

BLANCHE. You must explain it! *Your* disgrace is *mine.*

STERLING. [*Alarmed at having said so much, tries to retract a little.*] Disgrace was too strong a word—I didn't mean that. I'm in trouble. I'm in trouble. Good God, can't you see it? And if you love me, why don't you leave me alone?

BLANCHE. How can I go on loving you without your confidence?—without ever being suffered to give you any sympathy? Doll wives are out of fashion, and even if they weren't, I could never be one.

STERLING. [*Laughing.*] My dear, I'd never accuse you of being stuffed with sawdust.

BLANCHE. Oh, and now you joke about it Take care, Dick.

STERLING. What's this, a threat?

BLANCHE. Yes, if you like to call it that. You've been putting me more and more completely out of your life; take care that I don't finish your work and go the last step.

STERLING. [*Seizing her roughly by the wrist.*] The last step! What do you mean by that? [*Holding her hand more roughly.*] *You dare* to be unfaithful to me!

BLANCHE. What! You could think I meant that! Ugh! How could you?

STERLING. Well, what did you mean then? Eh?

[*Pulling her up close to him, her face close to his. She realizes first by the odor, then by a searching look at his face, that he is partly under the influence of liquor.*

BLANCHE. [*With pathetic shame.*] Let me go! I see what's the matter with you, but the reason is no excuse; you've been drinking.

STERLING. [*Dropping her hand.*] Ugh! The usual whimper of a woman!

[RUTH *reënters Right.*

RUTH. Well, Blanche, dear, your mother's in a calmer frame of mind, and I must go. Dick, can you lunch with me to-morrow?

STERLING. [*Hesitating, not caring about it.*] Er — to-morrow? — er —

RUTH. Oh, only for business. I must have a new business man now to do all that *he* did for me, and I'm going to try to make up to you for not having been always your — *best* friend, by putting my affairs in *your* hands.

BLANCHE. [*Serious, uneasy, almost frightened.*] Aunt Ruth —

[*She stops.*

RUTH. What, dear?

BLANCHE. Nothing.

[*She gives* STERLING *a searching, steady look and keeps her eyes upon him, trying to read his real self.*

RUTH. [*Continues to* STERLING.] Mr. Mason is coming to me in the morning, and if you will lunch with me at one, I will then be able to give all the papers over to you.

[STERLING, *who up to this time has been almost dumbfounded by this sudden good fortune, now collects himself, and speaks delightedly but with sufficient reserve of his feelings.* BLANCHE *does not take her eyes from* STERLING'S *face.*

STERLING. Aunt Ruth, I thank you from the bottom of my heart, and I will do my best.

BLANCHE. [*Quickly.*] Promise her, Dick, before

me — give her your word of honor — you will be faithful to Aunt Ruth's trust.

[*He answers* BLANCHE'S *look steadily with a hard gaze of his own.*

RUTH. His acceptance of my trust is equal to that, Blanche.

BLANCHE. It is of course, isn't it, Dick?

STERLING. Of course.

[BLANCHE *is not content, but has to satisfy herself with this.*

RUTH. To-morrow at one, then.

[*She starts to go.*

[JORDAN *enters Left.*

JORDAN. Mr. Warden.

RUTH. I can't wait. Good-by.

[*She goes out Left*

BLANCHE. We will see Mr. Warden.

JORDAN. Yes, madam.

[*He goes out Left.*

STERLING. Blanche, go to your mother and ask her to see Ned to thank him. I want a minute's talk with him if you don't mind.

BLANCHE. [*Pathetically.*] What difference does it make, Dick, if I *do* mind?

STERLING. Don't say that, old girl, and don't think it.

BLANCHE. Dick, you *are* honest, aren't you?

STERLING. [*Without flinching.*] What a question, Blanche!

[JORDAN *enters Left announcing "Mr. Warden."*

WARDEN *enters, and* JORDAN *goes out.*

[EDWARD WARDEN, *though in reality scarcely younger than* STERLING, *looks at least ten years his junior. He is good-looking, practical, a reasoning being, and self-controlled. He is a thorough American, with the fresh and strong*

ideals of his race, and with the feeling of romance alive in the bottom of his heart.

STERLING. [*In enormous relief, greets him joyfully.*] Ned, what do you think! The greatest news going!

BLANCHE. Dick!

STERLING. Excuse me, Blanche, I forgot; but Ned will know how I can't help being glad.

[WARDEN *goes to* MRS. STERLING.

BLANCHE. [*Shaking* NED'S *hand.*] And Mr. Warden knows nothing could make me "*glad*" to-day. Thank you for all your kindness —

WARDEN. Don't thank me; it was nothing.

BLANCHE. Yes, please let me thank you all I can; it won't be half what I feel, but I want to know that you know even my silence is full of gratitude for all you've done for my mother, sisters, and me.

STERLING. Yes, we're all immensely indebted to you, Ned, old man.

BLANCHE. I will tell mother. I know she wants to see you.

[*She goes out Right.*

STERLING. [*Speaking with suppressed excitement and uncontrollable gladness, unable to keep it back any longer.*] Ned, my wife's aunt, Miss Hunter, has put all her business in my hands.

WARDEN. Made you her agent?

STERLING. Yes! What a godsend! Hunter didn't leave a cent.

[*A moment's pause of astonishment.*]

WARDEN. What do you mean?

STERLING. It seems he's been losing for a long time. Everything he had he lost in the copper crash.

WARDEN. But this is awful! What will Mrs. Hunter and her two young daughters do?

STERLING. I don't know. I hadn't thought of that.

WARDEN. You'll have to think of it.

STERLING. I?

WARDEN. Of course you'll have to help them.

STERLING. I can't! Look here, I didn't tell you the truth about my affairs last week, when I struck you for that loan.

WARDEN. You don't mean to say you weren't straight with me?

STERLING. Oh, I only didn't want to frighten you till I'd got the money; if you had made me the loan, I'd have owned up afterwards all right enough.

WARDEN. Owned up what?

STERLING. That I told you a pack of lies

— that I haven't any security! — that I haven't anything but *debts*.

WARDEN. [*Strongly.*] Good things to borrow on! Look here, Dick, how long have we been friends?

STERLING. Since that day at boarding school when you took a licking for something I did.

WARDEN. What I mean is we were pals at school, chums at college, stanch friends for twenty years.

STERLING. Hell! Are we as old as all that?

WARDEN. Inseparable friends till the last two years.

[STERLING'S *eyes shift.*

STERLING. I've been overworked lately, and everything has gone wrong!

WARDEN. [*Comes up to him, and speaks firmly but still friendly.*] You *yourself* have *gone wrong!*

STERLING. [*On the defensive.*] What do you mean?

WARDEN. Why did you take your business out of my hands?

STERLING. The law didn't pay me enough. I thought I'd try a little amateur stockbroking.

[*Smiling insincerely.*

WARDEN. You didn't want *me to know* what you were doing!

STERLING. Rats!

WARDEN. You didn't want me to know what funds — *whose* funds — you were using — *mis*using.

STERLING. [*Ugly.*] What!

WARDEN. Whose money you were gambling with!

STERLING. Have you been spying on me?

WARDEN. Your *wife's* money!

STERLING. Well, she's *my* wife, and you don't know what you're talking about!

[*He turns from him and picks up a book from the table upside down and pretends to read it.*

WARDEN. You stole from me once when you were a boy!

STERLING. No! I didn't!

[*Throwing the book down.*

WARDEN. You lie! Do you hear me? *You lie!* [*He waits a second.* STERLING *does nothing.*] I was never sure till to-day! I fought against ever thinking it, believing my suspicions were an injustice to you, but little things were always disappearing out of my rooms — finally, even money. Lately, that old suspicion has come back with a fuller force, and to-day it became a certainty.

STERLING. How to-day?

WARDEN. Because if it weren't true, you'd have knocked me down just now when I called you first a thief and *twice* a liar!

[*He stands squarely facing him.* STERLING *stands facing him also, surprised, taken off his guard.*

STERLING. Oh, come, you're joking! [WARDEN *makes an angry exclamation.*] Why're you telling me all this now?

WARDEN. Because I want you to be careful. I want you to know some one is watching you! Some one who knows what you've come to! Some one who knows you can't resist temptation! Some one who knows money not yours *has* stuck to your fingers!

STERLING. You mind your own business.

WARDEN. I'll mind *yours* if it's necessary to protect people who are dear to me!

[STERLING *looks at him with a sudden suspicion.*

STERLING. [*Insinuatingly.*] I didn't know you were particularly attached to Mrs. Hunter.

WARDEN. I'm not.

STERLING. Or to her two unmarried daughters!

WARDEN. Nor am I!

STERLING. [*With whispered intensity.*] By God, if you are in love with my wife!

WARDEN. If you thought that out loud, I'd knock you down!

STERLING. Huh! you talk as if you thought I were a coward!

WARDEN. No, not a *physical* coward — I've seen you do too many plucky things — but a *moral* coward — yes, you are one!

[*Straight to him, standing close and looking him squarely in the eyes.*

STERLING. [*Wavering.*] Oh, you're too damned preachy!

[MRS. HUNTER *enters Right with* CLARA. MRS. HUNTER *shakes hands with* WARDEN *silently, happy in the feeling that she is in great afflic-*

tion, and satisfied with the appearance and impression she is making. She carries her handkerchief, with its black border, ready in her hand. CLARA *has silently shaken hands with* WARDEN, *after her mother. She afterwards goes to* STERLING *and hands him several of the letters of condolence. She then goes to the window at Left, pulling aside the curtain, and stands looking out, rather bored, wishing she could go out and take a walk.*

MRS. HUNTER. We will never forget your kindness. Will the evening papers have anything in, do you think?

WARDEN. No, not before morning.

MRS. HUNTER. [*Sighs.*] Every one was there.

STERLING. Where's Blanche?

MRS. HUNTER. Upstairs. She said she was going after Aunt Ruth.

STERLING. [*Frightened.*] After Aunt Ruth? [*Strongly.*] What for?

MRS. HUNTER. I don't know. [*Whimpering.*] I'm not considered in the family any longer!

STERLING. I shall stop and take her home.

[JORDAN *enters.*

JORDAN. Will you see visitors, madam?

STERLING. No.

[*He goes out Right.*

MRS. HUNTER. "No"? Yes, we will! I need to see some one, or I shall break down. Go upstairs, Clara!

CLARA. No, *why* need I?

MRS. HUNTER. You're not out yet.

CLARA. I don't care! At this rate I'll never get "out." Who are they, Jordan?

JORDAN. Miss Sillerton, Miss Godesby, and Mr. Trotter, miss.

WARDEN. I must go, Mrs. Hunter.

MRS. HUNTER. [*Relieved.*] So sorry. Could you go straight to Mr. Mason? He wishes to see you?

[*Shaking hands.*

WARDEN. Certainly.

MRS. HUNTER. Thank you.

[WARDEN *inclines his head to* CLARA.

CLARA. [*Lightly.*] Good-by!

[WARDEN *goes out Left.*

MRS. HUNTER. I don't think we ought to receive Mr. Trotter.

CLARA. Pshaw! why not? If there's really any idea of my mar—

[*She stops short, silenced by a look from her mother and an indication toward* JORDAN.

MRS. HUNTER. Show them up, Jordan. [JORDAN *bows and goes out.*] How do I look, dear?

[*Arranges her handkerchief.*

CLARA. [*Looking in the mirror.*] How do I?

MRS. HUNTER. [*With her back to* CLARA.] I asked you first how *I* looked!

CLARA. [*Not observing.*] Oh, you're all right; how am I?

MRS. HUNTER. [*Not looking at* CLARA.] Charming! We'll go upstairs and come down again; I don't think it nice to be found here as if we were expecting visitors.

[*They go out Right.*

[JORDAN *steps into the room to announce the visitors, and seeing no one there, bows as the three pass him.*

JORDAN. The ladies will be down at once.

[*He goes out Right*

[*The three turn, looking about the room with curiosity, as if the funeral might have made some difference in the house.*

[MISS SILLERTON *is a handsome, attractive woman, most fashionably dressed and perfectly conventional in character and intelligence.* MISS GODESBY *is a little slow, more assertive, sharper of tongue, more acutely intelligent, and equally smartly dressed. She has still a remnant of real, sincere feeling buried under a cynical mask which her life in a fast set has developed for her self-preservation.* TROTTER *is a foolish young person, meaning well enough according to his lights, which are not of the biggest and brightest.*

TROTTER. Classy house altogether!

MISS SILLERTON. Mrs. Hunter went to the

most expensive decorator in town, and told him, no matter what it cost, to go ahead and do his *worst!*

[*They all laugh and seat themselves comfortably.*

TROTTER. Say! The youngest daughter is a good looker — very classy.

MISS SILLERTON. That's the one we told you about, the one we want you to marry.

MISS GODESBY. Yes, with your money and her cleverness, she'll rubber neck you into the smartest push in town!

TROTTER. You've promised I shall know the whole classy lot before spring.

MISS GODESBY. So you will if you do as we tell you. But you mustn't let society see that you *know* you're getting in; nothing pleases society so much as to think you're a blatant idiot. It makes everybody feel you're their equal — that's why you get in.

TROTTER. I've got a coach and can drive four-in-hand. I've an automobile drag, and the biggest private yacht in the world building. I'm going to have the most expensive house in Long Island, where the oysters come from, and I've bought a lot in Newport twice as big as the swellest fellow's there. I've got a house in London and a flat in Paris, and I make money fly. I think I ought to be a cinch as a classy success.

MISS GODESBY. Don't be a yap; flag Clara Hunter and you're all right!

MISS SILLERTON. Her father's position was the best in this country!

TROTTER. But he's dead.

[*Sitting.*

MISS GODESBY. A good thing for you, for he would never have stood for you!

TROTTER. He'd have had to — or do without

me as a son-in-law — I wouldn't marry the Venus of Milo if her father didn't think I was good enough. I'm no Dodo bird!

MISS GODESBY. It's up to you now, Trotter! Go in and win.

[*Enter* TOMPSON *Right; a decided change takes place in all their manners.*

TOMPSON. Madam will be down at once, miss.

MISS SILLERTON. Thank you.

[TOMPSON *goes out Right.*

MISS GODESBY. Only stay a minute or two, Trotty — we're doing our best for you, but we must look out for ourselves, too, and we've come here to-day on business.

MISS SILLERTON. How'll we ever get the subject on to clothes?

MISS GODESBY. Humph! Do you think you

can talk five minutes with Mrs. Hunter and not hit that topic? It's a bull's eye!

TROTTER. I don't see where I'm going to come into this classy conversation.

MISS GODESBY. You see, Trotty, they brought over piles of clothes from Europe this year, and we want to get hold of them before any one else has a chance — get 'em cheap before they have an idea anybody else'll buy them.

TROTTER. Who buy what?

MISS SILLERTON. *We* — buy their winter clothes.

TROTTER. For Heaven's sake!

MISS GODESBY. Laugh, you silly! I heard the Reed girls planning to come to-morrow. They didn't dare come to-day. Those girls haven't any sand! They're always getting left.

TROTTER. You two *are* Dodo birds!

MISS GODESBY. I say, Eleanor, you're such a lobster about prices and Mrs. Hunter's no idiot, we'd better agree on some sort of a signal! Listen! if you like a gown very much, ask the price, then say to me, "My dear, your hat pin is coming out." And if I think it's a bargain, I'll say, "So it is, thank you; won't you put it in for me?" And if I think Mrs. Hunter's trying to stick you, I'll say "No, it isn't; it's always like that."

MISS SILLERTON. All right.

[MRS. HUNTER *and* CLARA *enter Right. The manner of* MISS SILLERTON *and* MISS GODESBY *changes immediately. They speak with rather subdued voices, in the tone of conventional sympathy which is usually adopted on such occasions.* MRS. HUNTER *also assumes the manner of a martyr to grief.* CLARA *is casual and hard.*

MISS SILLERTON. [*Shakes hands with* MRS. HUNTER.] Dear Mrs. Hunter.

[*She kisses her.*

Clara, dear.

[*She kisses her.*

[MISS GODESBY *goes to* MRS. HUNTER *and shakes hands while* MISS SILLERTON *crosses to* CLARA; *Trotter shakes hands with* MRS. HUNTER *as* MISS GODESBY *goes to* CLARA.

TROTTER. I hope you don't think my coming an intrusion.

MRS. HUNTER. Not at all.

MISS GODESBY. I felt we must stop in for a few minutes to give you our love and sympathy and find out how you are.

MRS. HUNTER. I've been through a terrible strain. My loss is even greater than I could ever possibly imagine.

CLARA. [*Who misinterprets her mother's remark.*] Yes, indeed, I should say it was!

[MRS. HUNTER *stops her with a warning look.*

MRS. HUNTER. But every one has been most kind. *Lady Hopeton* sent me a beautiful long letter to-day.

MISS GODESBY. And I'm glad to find you looking so well. Black *suits* you!

[*She exchanges a knowing glance with* MISS SILLERTON.

MRS. HUNTER. Oh, I don't know, Julia; I've always thought black very *trying* for me.

MISS GODESBY. Oh, *no! every one's* saying *just* the reverse!

MRS. HUNTER. But — I suppose clothes don't interest you, Mr. Trotter?

TROTTER. Oh, yes, they do, out of sight!

CLARA. Well, I wish you could have seen the beautiful things we brought over with us!

MISS SILLERTON. Julia and I were just speaking about it, and pitying you from the bottom of our hearts.

[MISS SILLERTON *and* MISS GODESBY *again exchange surreptitious glances.*

MRS. HUNTER. Every one's been most kind. [*There is an awkward pause for a moment, no one knowing quite what to say. Both* MISS GODESBY *and* MISS SILLERTON *have started the conversation in the direction of clothing and are fearful of the topic being changed. As the pause becomes embarrassing, they look helplessly from one to the other, and all five, suddenly and at once, make an ineffectual effort to say something — or nothing. Out of the general confusion* MRS. HUNTER *comes to the front, mistress of the situation.*] Are

you going to stay in New York this winter, Mr. Trotter?

TROTTER. Yes, I'm negotiating for one of the biggest classy building plots on upper Fifth Avenue.

CLARA. [*To* MISS GODESBY.] I saw in the papers you were at the dance last night.

[MISS GODESBY *nods and motions surreptitiously to* TROTTER *to go. He, however, doesn't understand.*

MRS. HUNTER. [*With interest again in life.*] Oh, *were you?* What did you wear?

MISS GODESBY. Oh, dowdy old things. I haven't bought my winter frocks yet.

[*She repeats this casually as if to herself.*

[MISS SILLERTON *motions to* TROTTER *to go, but he has forgotten and still doesn't understand.*

TROTTER. What?

MISS GODESBY. You warned us not to let you forget your engagement!

TROTTER. What engagement?

MISS SILLERTON. How do we know! we only know you said you *had* to go!

TROTTER. Never said so! Oh! [*As it dawns upon him.*] Oh, yes! of course. [*He rises.*] Very sorry — must be off. Only dropped in — er — that is, came in to express my respectful sympathy.

[*Shaking hands with* MRS. HUNTER.

MRS. HUNTER. [*Who rises.*] I hope you will come and see us again.

CLARA. Do! It'll be a godsend! We'll be dull as ditchwater here this winter!

TROTTER. I shall be delighted to call again. Good-by. [*He bows to Clara. In his embarrassment he starts to shake hands all over again, but,*

realizing his mistake, laughs nervously.] Oh, I have already.

MISS SILLERTON. Good-by, Trotter.

MISS GODESBY. Don't forget we're booked with you at Sherry's.

TROTTER. Whose treat?

MISS GODESBY. Oh! *Yours*, of course —

TROTTER. I say, why can't I stay? I won't interfere.

MRS. HUNTER. Oh, do stay, Mr. Trotter!

MISS GODESBY. Oh, do stay!

[*Suggesting by her tone that he mustn't dare to remain.*

CLARA. Good!

[TROTTER *remains, and they all settle themselves again for a long stay.*

MRS. HUNTER. By the way, you were speaking just now of your winter frocks. It occurs to me —

of course I don't know as I really want to dispose of them, but — er —

[*She hesitates purposely.*

MISS GODESBY. Oh, *would* you? [*Rising, she takes a chair nearer to* MRS. HUNTER.] You *dear* thing!

MRS. HUNTER. The dresses are no use to us now, and when *we're* out of mourning — *they'll* be out of style. You could wear Jess' things perfectly, Julia.

MISS SILLERTON. And even something of yours could be made over for us.

MRS. HUNTER. But I'm so much older than you!

MISS SILLERTON. [*Thoughtlessly.*] Yes, but you never dress appropriately to your age.

CLARA. [*Laughing delightedly.*] That's pretty good!

MISS SILLERTON. [*Saves herself.*] You know what I mean, you always *look* so *youthful*, you *can't* dress any older.

MRS. HUNTER. [*Rising.*] Clara, dear, go upstairs and have Tompson bring down my Worth dress and Jess' Doucet and your Paquin. [*She goes with* CLARA *to the door, Right, and then whispers to her.*] If you remember, don't tell what we paid — we ought to get nearly double out of these girls — and warn Tompson not to be surprised at anything she hears.

[MISS GODESBY *and* MISS SILLERTON *exchange glances.* CLARA *goes out Right.*

MRS. HUNTER. It seems as if I had no further interest in clothes, anyway.

MISS GODESBY. Don't say that. Every one I've seen this afternoon is wildly enthusiastic over your mourning.

MRS. HUNTER. Well, I went straight to Madame O'Hoolihan and gave her carte blank!

MISS GODESBY. I wouldn't like to be the ice man when your bill comes in! — and clothes abroad are so much cheaper.

MRS. HUNTER. [*Thoughtlessly.*] Oh, *half!*

MISS GODESBY. [*Quickly.*] You see you'll be doing us a really great favor letting us have some of your things!

MRS. HUNTER. [*Realizing her nearly fatal error.*] Oh! Oh, yes — but — er — I must say that *we* found prices while in Paris *this year* rather *atrocious!*

[CLARA *reënters Right.*

CLARA. [*Sighs.*] O dear! It breaks my heart not to wear my ball dress, my dear Julia; it was designed specially for me. I told Marie to put it on, mama; my clothes fit her perfectly,

and I thought it would show so much better what it is.

MRS. HUNTER. Here they are.

[*Rises as* TOMPSON *enters Right.*

TOMPSON. Mrs. Hunter's reception gown.

[*Displaying it.*

CLARA. Oh, this *is* a beauty!

[*She takes the costume and drapes it over a chair.* MISS GODESBY *and* MISS SILLERTON *come closer to examine.*

MRS. HUNTER. Tompson. — [*Taking her to one side, whispers.*] — I forget; do you remember what I paid for this dress?

TOMPSON. [*Whispers back.*] One hundred and sixty dollars, madam.

MRS. HUNTER. Oh, yes. Don't say anything. [*Returning to the others.*] Do you like it?

MISS SILLERTON. Perfectly lovely! } [*At the same time.*
MISS GODESBY. Immensely. It's great! }

MRS. HUNTER. [*Hesitates.*] I forget just what I paid for it, but I believe it was two hundred dollars.

[CLARA *half exclaims in astonishment, but on being pinched surreptitiously on the arm by* MRS. HUNTER *she grasps the situation and starts in to do her share.*

CLARA. Oh, no, mama! I'm sure it was more than that!

MRS. HUNTER. Well, perhaps it was two — twenty or two — twenty-five.

TROTTER. That's cheap, isn't it?

MISS GODESBY. Shut up.

[TOMPSON'S *face is always a perfect blank, showing no expression or surprise; she has lived with* MRS. HUNTER *for many years and "knows her business."*

MISS GODESBY. [*In a very different tone of voice, influenced by the big price.*] Of course, I see it's made of the best material. But it isn't my color.

MRS. HUNTER. It's the very latest shade.

MISS GODESBY. Yes, I know; but I think as you said a little while ago, perhaps it is a trifle too old for me.

MRS. HUNTER. I might let you have it for a little less; say one hundred and eighty.

MISS GODESBY. Thank you very much. I'll think it over.

MISS SILLERTON. What's the other?

CLARA. This is a dinner dress of Jess'.

[*Holding it up to her own waist.*

MISS SILLERTON. [*Carried away by the dress.*] Oh, lovely, — perfectly charming, — an adorable gown!

[MISS GODESBY *pulls her arm and tries to make her less enthusiastic.*

MISS GODESBY. [*To* CLARA *and* MRS. HUNTER.] Excuse me.

[*She takes* MISS SILLERTON *to one side and whispers in her ear.*

MISS SILLERTON. [*Aloud.*] I can't help it. I'm crazy about the dress!

[*Meanwhile* MRS. HUNTER *and* TOMPSON *have whispered together.*

MRS. HUNTER. They said themselves this was the most successful frock they turned out this autumn.

MISS SILLERTON. And how much is *this* one?

MRS. HUNTER. [*Very quickly, trying not to speak consciously.*] This was two hundred and seventy-five.

[CLARA *bites her lips in surprise and winks*

visibly to TOMPSON, *who gives no sign and is otherwise imperturbable.*

MISS SILLERTON. [*To* MISS GODESBY, *looking hard at her.*] My dear, your hat pin is coming out!

MISS GODESBY. [*Looking hard at her.*] No, it isn't; it's always like that.

MISS SILLERTON. [*Going closer to her, whispers.*] Which does that mean? I forget!

MISS GODESBY. It's a *gouge!*

MISS SILLERTON. I can't help it; I can't resist.

MRS. HUNTER. [*Whispers to* CLARA.] She's going to take it; I wish I'd asked more.

MISS SILLERTON. Mrs. Hunter, I'll *take* the dinner dress! I'm crazy about it!

MRS. HUNTER. I'm glad to have you have it; I'm glad to be able to do you, in a way, a favor.

[MARIE *at this moment enters dressed in the*

most exquisite ball dress of the very latest fashion and looks extremely lovely.

CLARA. Here's mine! I could cry to think I'll never wear it!

MARIE. *Voila*, madame!

[*A short silence, while the women sit down and drink in the gown.*

MISS SILLERTON. [*In a subdued voice of awed admiration.*] Beautiful!

MISS GODESBY. Great!

TROTTER. [*To* MISS GODESBY.] *I'm* stuck on the *girl;* introduce me. She's out of sight!

[MRS. HUNTER *sighs long and loud, — a sigh of appreciation and admiration.* MARIE *stands in the centre of the stage facing the audience.*

MISS GODESBY. May we see her back?

CLARA. Her *entire* back, if she turns around!

MRS. HUNTER. Turn around, Marie.

MARIE. *Oui*, madame.

[*She turns her back — the dress is cut extremely in the back.*

MISS SILLERTON. Oh!

MISS GODESBY. Rather!

MRS. HUNTER. The way everything is made this year.

MISS GODESBY. I'm afraid my back is rather full of bones.

CLARA. They told us in Paris, bones were coming in! [*She takes a large American beauty rose from a vase on the piano and slips it down* MARIE'S *back so that the dress seems much less décolleté.*] There, never too late to mend!

MISS GODESBY. How much is this one?

[MISS GODESBY *and* MISS SILLERTON *examine the dress.*

CLARA. [*Whispers to* MRS. HUNTER.] You paid two hundred for it!

MRS. HUNTER. Three hundred dollars. It is really superb.

MISS SILLERTON. [*Pulling* MISS GODESBY *around quickly.*] My dear, your hat pin is coming out!

MISS GODESBY. Don't be absurd!

MISS SILLERTON. What?

MISS GODESBY. It's my turn, sit down; you got the last! You won't mind my being frank, Mrs. Hunter?

MRS. HUNTER. [*On the defensive.*] Certainly not.

MISS GODESBY. I think the price is too much.

TROTTER. Oh, go on, pay it!

MISS GODESBY. Will you sign the check?

TROTTER. *Excuse me!*

CLARA. I'd give twice that if only I could wear it to one ball this winter!

MRS. HUNTER. I wouldn't part with it for a penny less. I couldn't afford to.

[*The manners and voices of all become a little strained.*

MISS GODESBY. That is of course your affair.

MRS. HUNTER. [*Politely.*] We needn't keep Marie any longer, at any rate, need we? You can go, Marie, and you too, Tompson.

[CLARA *and* MRS. HUNTER *help place the other dresses on* TOMPSON'S *arms.*

MISS SILLERTON. [*To* MISS GODESBY, *on the opposite side of the room, in a lowered voice.*] I'll take it; I'm willing to pay that.

MISS GODESBY. Don't you dare interfere! I want the gown, but I know she'll come down, — if she doesn't, I'll make a bluff at going. Then

if she sticks to her price, I'll come back and pay it.

[*They turn to* MRS. HUNTER.

MISS SILLERTON. Oh, Mrs. Hunter, may I see my dress just one more minute?

MRS. HUNTER. Certainly.

[*She and* CLARA *come back with the dress.*

MARIE. [*To* TOMPSON *by the door at Right.*] *Vite!* Come! Come! Jordan 'ave stole ze photograph machine of Mees Clara, and he make now one pigsher of me in ze dress!

[*Smiling mischievously, delighted, she goes out Right.*

MISS SILLERTON. Thank you.

[*She leaves her dress.*

MRS. HUNTER. Take this too, Tompson.

TOMPSON. Yes, madam.

[MRS. HUNTER *speaks to* TOMPSON, *aside, and*

CLARA, *near them, watches the two visitors out of the corner of her eye.*

MISS GODESBY. [*Aside to* MISS SILLERTON.] I'll leave my muff; that'll be a good excuse to come back.

TROTTER. [*Also in a lowered voice to* MISS GODESBY.] Dodo!

[TOMPSON *goes out Right.*

[MRS. HUNTER *and* CLARA *come back.*

MISS GODESBY. You really couldn't take less than three hundred?

MRS. HUNTER. I wish I could if only for your own sake; but I really couldn't in justice to myself.

MISS GODESBY. I'm very sorry — and I'm afraid we must be going now.

MRS. HUNTER. [*Not believing they will go.*] Oh, must you? Well, it was very kind of you to come.

[MISS GODESBY *leaves her muff upon the table at the Left.*

MISS SILLERTON. [*Shakes hands with* MRS. HUNTER.] Good-by.

[*She goes on to* CLARA.

[MISS GODESBY *comes to shake hands with* MRS. HUNTER.

MRS. HUNTER. I think you're making a mistake not to take the dress, Julia dear.

MISS GODESBY. Perhaps, but I really can't go more than two hundred and fifty.

[MRS. HUNTER *looks surreptitiously at* CLARA, *who slyly shakes her head to her mother.*

MRS. HUNTER. Oh, quite impossible!

MISS GODESBY. Good-by.

MRS. HUNTER. Good-by.

MISS GODESBY. Good-by, Clara.

MRS. HUNTER. [*Frightened.*] Would you like to see the dress off?

MISS GODESBY. Oh, my dear, it was as *off* as I would ever like to see it. Good-by.

MRS. HUNTER. Good-by. [MISS SILLERTON *and* MISS GODESBY *get to doorway Left.*] You *won't* take it?

MISS GODESBY. *Can't!* Good-by.

CLARA. [*Dryly.*] You're forgetting your muff!

TROTTER. Rubber!

MISS GODESBY. [*Coming back for it.*] How stupid!

[*She goes away to the door again in silence, which is full of suspense for all of them. As she reaches the door* MRS. HUNTER *speaks.*

MRS. HUNTER. Look here, Julia, don't say another word; you shall have the dress for two hundred and fifty.

MISS GODESBY. [*Rushing back, followed by all the others.*] You dear! I'm afraid you think I've been rather nasty!

MRS. HUNTER. Oh, no, of course business is business, and I'd *rather you* had it than see it wasted on some of our other friends who'd be sights in it!

MISS SILLERTON. Good-by. [*Kisses her this time.*] I haven't said half I feel; you've been in my thoughts all these last few days.

MRS. HUNTER. Thank you, dear.

[*Kisses her.*

MISS GODESBY. Shall we send around for the dresses in the morning?

MRS. HUNTER. Or I'll send them.

MISS GODESBY. No, we won't trouble you.

MISS SILLERTON. Good-by!

MRS. HUNTER AND CLARA. Good-by!

[MISS SILLERTON *and* MISS GODESBY *go out Left, followed by* TROTTER, *who has joined in all the good-bys, and upon whom* CLARA *has more or less continuously kept her "weather eye."*

MRS. HUNTER. I'm perfectly sure if I'd stuck to three hundred, Julia Godesby would have sent around when she got home and paid it!

CLARA. I'm glad you didn't run the risk though, for we'll need every cent we can get now.

[*She runs her fingers rapidly over the piano keys.*

[BLANCHE *reënters Right.*

MRS. HUNTER. Why, I thought you'd gone long ago.

BLANCHE. Jess begged me to stay with her. Try to understand her, mother; I think she will miss father more than any of us.

[JORDAN *enters Left.*

JORDAN. Mr. Warden has come back, madam.

[WARDEN *enters Left.*

WARDEN. Forgive my intruding so soon again, but did Mr. Mason leave a letter case of Mr. Hunter's here?

[BLANCHE *begins looking for the case.*

MRS. HUNTER. I haven't seen it; I'll ask the servants to look. Excuse me, I'm quite tired out; we've been receiving a long visit of condolence.

[*She goes out, Right, with* CLARA, *who links her arm in her mother's.*

BLANCHE. [*Finding the case, which has fallen beneath the table.*] Here it is. Dear old pocket-book —

[*Her voice breaks on the last word, and turning her face away to hide her tears, she hands him the well-worn letter case.*

WARDEN. Mrs. Sterling, I'm glad they left us

alone, because Mr. Mason said he hadn't been able to manage it — to see you alone — and yet he wanted *you only* to examine these. They are private papers of Mr. Hunter; he thought they ought not to be destroyed without being read, and yet *he* hesitated to read them. We thought that duty devolved best upon *you*. [*He hands back the letter case.*] Shall I wait and take back the case to Mr. Mason with the papers you wish him to have?

BLANCHE. Oh, no, I will send them; I mustn't keep you while I read them. I'm always taking more of your time than I ought.

WARDEN. [*Speaks with sincerity, but without any suggestion of love-making.*] But never as much as I want to give you! Don't forget, Mrs. Sterling, what you promised me at your wedding, — that your husband's best man should be your best friend.

BLANCHE. And nobody knows what it means to a woman, even a happily married woman like me — [*This is spoken with a slight effort, as if she is persuading herself that she is a happily married woman.*] — to have an honest friend like you. It's those people who have failed that say there is no such thing as a platonic friendship.

WARDEN. We'll prove them wrong.

BLANCHE. We will. Good-by, and thank you.

WARDEN. And thank *you!* [*Starting to go, he turns.*] Shall I bring that Russian pianist around to play for you some day next week?

BLANCHE. Do — I want some music.

WARDEN. Only let me know what day. [*He goes out Left.* BLANCHE *sits by the table and opens the case. She looks first at a memoranda and reads what is on the outside.*] A business memoranda. Lists of bonds. [*She opens and looks at*

the next paper only a second, and then closes it.] This, Mr. Mason will understand better than I. [*She puts it back in the pocket case. She finds a photograph in the case.*] My picture!—[*She looks for others, but finds none.*]—and *only* mine! Oh, father! . . . [*She wipes away tears from her eyes so as to see the picture, which is an old one.*] Father, I returned *your* love. [*She reads on the back of photograph.*] "Blanche, my darling daughter, at fourteen years of age!" That's mine! that's my own! [*And she puts the picture away separately. She takes up a small packet of very old love-letters tied with faded old pink tape.*] Old letters from mother; they must be her love-letters. She shall have them,—they may soften her. [*She takes up a slip of paper and reads on the outside.*] This is something for Mason, too. [*She puts it back in the case. She takes up a sealed envelope,*

blank.] Nothing on it, and sealed. [*She looks at it a moment, thinking.*] Father, did you want this opened? If you didn't, why not have destroyed it? Ah! I needn't be afraid; *you* had nothing to hide from the world. [*Tearing it open, she reads.*] "I have discovered my son-in-law, Richard Sterling, in irregular business dealing. He is not honest. I will watch him as long as I live; but when you read this, Mason, keep your eye upon him for my daughter's sake. He has been warned by me — he may never trip again, and her happiness lies in ignorance." [*She starts, and looks about her to make sure she is alone. She then sits staring ahead for a few seconds; then she speaks.*] My boy's father dishonest! Disgrace — he owned it — threatening *my* boy! It mustn't come! It mustn't! *I'll* watch now. [*She goes to the fireplace, tearing the paper as she crosses the room,*

she burns the letter; then she gathers up the other letters and the pocket case.] He must give me his word of honor over Richard's little bed to-night that he will do nothing to ever make the boy ashamed of bearing his father's name!

[*She watches to see that every piece of the paper burns, as*

THE CURTAIN FALLS

ACT II

Christmas Eve; fourteen months later; the dining room of the Hunters' house, which is now lived in jointly by the STERLINGS *and* MRS. HUNTER *and her daughters. It is a dark wainscoted room, with curtains of crimson brocade. It is decorated with laurel roping, mistletoe, and holly, for Christmas. It is the end of a successful dinner party, fourteen happy and more or less congenial persons being seated at a table, as follows:* WARDEN, RUTH, MASON, CLARA, TROTTER, MRS. HUNTER, BLANCHE, STERLING, MISS SILLERTON, MR. GODESBY, JESSICA, DOCTOR STEINHART, *and* MISS GODESBY. *The*

room is dark on all sides, only a subdued light being shed on the table by two large, full candelabra with red shaded candles. As the curtain rises the bare backs of the three women nearest the footlights gleam out white. Candied fruit and other sweetmeats are being passed by four men servants, including JORDAN *and* LEONARD.

RUTH. My dear Blanche, what delicious candy!

MISS SILLERTON. Isn't it!

MISS GODESBY. Half of the candy offered one nowadays seems made of *papier-mâché.*

MRS. HUNTER. [*To* MISS GODESBY.] Julia, do tell me how Mr. Tomlins takes his wife's divorce?

MISS GODESBY. He takes it with a grain of salt!

MRS. HUNTER. But isn't he going to bring a counter suit?

STERLING. No.

RUTH. I hope not. I am an old-fashioned woman and don't believe in divorce!

MISS GODESBY. Really! But then you're not married!

MISS SILLERTON. What is the reason for so much divorce nowadays?

RUTH. Marriage is the principal one.

BLANCHE. *I* don't believe in divorce, either.

MISS SILLERTON. My dear, no woman married to as handsome a man as Mr. Sterling would.

TROTTER. You people are all out of date! More people get divorced nowadays than get married.

BLANCHE. Too many people do — that's the trouble. I meant what I said when I was married — "for better, for worse, till death us do part." — What is the opera Monday?

TROTTER. Something of Wagner's. He's a Dodo bird! Bores me to death! Not catchy enough music for me.

MRS. HUNTER. You'd adore him if you went to Bayreuth. Which was that opera, Clara, we heard at Bayreuth last summer? Was it *Faust* or *Lohengrin!* They play those two so much here I'm always getting them mixed!

MISS SILLERTON. Wagner didn't write *Faust!*

MRS. HUNTER. Didn't he? I thought he had; he's written so many operas the last few seasons!

CLARA. I like *Tannhäuser*, because as soon as you hear the "twinkle, twinkle, little stars" song, you can cheer up and think of your wraps and fur boots.

TROTTER. My favorite operas are *San Toy* and the *Roger Brothers*, though I saw *Florodora* thirty-six times!

BLANCHE. Mother would have gone with you every one of those thirty-six *Florodora* times. She's not really fond of music.

MRS. HUNTER. Not fond of music! Didn't I have an opera box for four years?

TROTTER. Why doesn't Conried make some arrangement with Weber and Fields and introduce their chorus into *Faust* and *Carmen?*

DR. STEINHART. Great idea! [*To* MISS GODESBY.] Did you get a lot of jolly presents?

MISS GODESBY. Not half bad, especially two fine French bulls!

[*All are laughing and talking together.*

BLANCHE. What did you get, Mr. Warden?

WARDEN. Three copies of "David Harum," two umbrellas, and a cigar case too short for my cigars.

MISS GODESBY. Give it to me for cigarettes.

WARDEN. It's too long for cigarettes. Then I had something that's either a mouchoir or a handkerchief case, or for neckties, or shaving papers, or something or other.

TROTTER. Yes, I know, I got one of those, too.

DR. STEINHART. So did I!

BLANCHE. I must start the women; we are coming back here to arrange a surprise for you men.

[*She nods her head in signal to* STERLING, *and rises. All rise.*

STERLING. One moment please. One toast on Christmas night! Ned, give us a toast.

ALL THE WOMEN. [*But not in unison.*] Oh, yes! A toast! [*Ad lib.*]

WARDEN. [*Holding up his glass.*]

Here's to those whom we love!

And to those who love us!

And to those who love those whom we love

And to those who love those who love us!

ALL THE MEN. [*Not in unison.*] Good! Bravo! Bully toast! [*Ad lib.*]

[*Every one drinks.*

BLANCHE. One more toast, Dick. [*To the others.*] Christmas Day is our boy's birthday.

RUTH. Surely! a toast to Richard!

STERLING. Long life to Master Sterling, the best boy in the world, and to all his good friends at this table.

THE MEN. Hear! Hear!

[*All the women speak their next speeches at the same time.*

BLANCHE. [*Laughing.*] Of course! I've dropped my handkerchief.

[NED *dives under the table for it.*

MISS SILLERTON. O dear, my fan!

MISS GODESBY. What a bore! I've dropped a glove!

[STEINHART *goes under the table for it.*

CLARA. Both my gloves gone — I'm so sorry!

[GODESBY *goes under the table for them.*

MRS. HUNTER. Dick, please, I've dropped my smelling bottle.

[TROTTER *and* STERLING *go under the table for it.*

RUTH. My gloves, please, I'm so sorry!

[MASON *goes under the table for them.*

[*The speeches of the women are simultaneous, followed by the movements of the men also, all at the same time.*

[ALL *together*]

BLANCHE. Please don't bother; the servants —

[LEONARD, JORDAN, *and two extra men start to hunt under the table, too.*

MISS GODESBY. Women ought to have everything they own fastened to them with rubber-neck elastics.

[*The men, somewhat flustered, all rise with the various articles, and offer them to their respective owners.*

[*All the women thank the men profusely, and apologize at the same time.* STERLING *takes* MRS. HUNTER *out at back, followed by all the other couples, all talking.* RUTH *and* MASON *lag behind.*

RUTH. [*To* BLANCHE, *who with* WARDEN *waits for* RUTH *and* MASON *to pass.*] I want just a minute with Mr. Mason, Blanche. [BLANCHE *and* WARDEN *pass out before her.* RUTH *is*

alone with MASON. *She speaks as if she were carrying on a conversation that had been interrupted. She speaks in a lowered voice, indicating the private nature of what she has to say.*] I sent him imperative word yesterday I must have the bonds. I told him I wanted one to give to his wife for Christmas. He pretends to-day he didn't receive this letter, but he must have.

MASON. This makes the third time there has been some excuse for not giving you the bonds?

RUTH. Yes, and this letter he says he didn't get was sent to his office by hand.

MASON. I'll speak to him before I leave.

[*They go out at back.*

[*As they pass out,* JORDAN *stands by the doorway holding the curtains back. The other three men stand stiffly at the Right. As* MASON *and* RUTH *go out, the* SERVANTS *relax and exchange*

glances, each giving a little laugh out loud, except JORDAN. *During the following dialogue they empty the table preparatory to arranging the room for the Christmas tree.*

JORDAN. Sh! A very dull dinner, not an interesting word spoke.

FIRST FOOTMAN. The widder seemed chipper like!

LEONARD. And did you get on to the old lady's rig-out; mourning don't hang very heavy on her shoulders.

[*One chair is moved back.*

JORDAN. [*To* FIRST FOOTMAN.] Get the coffee. [*He goes out Right. To* LEONARD.] Get the smoking lay-out!

[LEONARD *goes out Right and brings back a silver tray laden with cigarettes, cigar boxes, and a burning alcohol lamp.*

LEONARD. If you ask me, I think she's going to put a bit more on the matrimonial mare if she gets the chance.

JORDAN. It's none of your business. You're *Mrs. Sterling's* servant now.

LEONARD. Good thing, too; it was a happy day for us when *they* moved in.

FIRST FOOTMAN. [*Reënters with the coffee.*] Say, did you see how that young feller over there [*Motioning to the lower right-hand corner of the table.*] shovelled the food in?

LEONARD. And the way he poured down the liquid — regular hog! My arm's tired a-filling of his glass.

[*And he drinks a glass of champagne which has been left untouched by a guest.*

JORDAN. He ain't nobody; he hasn't any money; he was just asked to fill up. He's one of these

yere singing chaps what's asked to pass the time after dinner with a song or two *gratis*. This dinner'll last him for food for a week!

[*Their manners suddenly change as the men reënter and take seats about the two ends of the table.* STERLING, MASON, *and* DOCTOR *down Left form one group. The other men are in a group between the window and the other end. On entering* STERLING *speaks.*

STERLING. Jordan, for heaven's sake, give us something to see by! You can't tell which end of your cigar to light in this confounded woman's candle-light. If I had my way, I'd have candelabras made of Welsbachs!

TROTTER. Bright idea, Sterling.

[STERLING, *laughing, joins his group, who laugh gently with him.* JORDAN *turns on the electric light. The servants pass the*

coffee, liqueurs, and the cigars and cigarettes. Meanwhile the following dialogue takes place, the men beginning to talk at once on their entrance.

STERLING. Mr. Mason, I'd like to ask your honest opinion on something if you'll give it me.

MASON. Certainly.

STERLING. This Hudson Electric Company.

DR. STEINHART. Oh! Dropped fearfully to-day.

STERLING. But that can happen easily with the best thing. To-morrow —

MASON. [*Interrupting.*] To-morrow it will drop to its *very bottom!*

STERLING. I don't believe it.

DR. STEINHART. Surely, Mr. Mason, the men who floated that are too clever to ruin *themselves*

MASON. They're out of it.

STERLING. Out of it!

MASON. They got out last week quietly.

STERLING. But —

MASON. Mark my words, the day after to-morrow there'll be several foolish people ruined, and *not one of the promoters of that company will lose a penny!*

STERLING. I don't believe it!

[*The crowd at the other end of the table, who have been listening to a tale from* TROTTER, *laugh heartily.*

TROTTER. [*Delighted with his success.*] I'm no Dodo bird!

[WARDEN *leaves this group casually and joins the other.*

MASON. [*To* STERLING.] Don't tell me *you're* in it?

STERLING. [*Ugly.*] Yes, I am in it!

MASON. Not *much?*

STERLING. Yes, *much!*

WARDEN. Much what?

STERLING. Oh, nothing; we were just discussing stocks.

WARDEN. And up there they're discussing Jeffreys and Fitzsimmons.

MASON. Listen, Dick, after a lifelong experience in Wall Street, I defy any broker to produce one customer who can show a profit after three consecutive years of speculation.

STERLING. Oh, you're too conservative; nothing venture, nothing have. Excuse me, I think Jeffreys and Fitzsimmons more amusing topics. Come along.

[STERLING *and* DR. STEINHART *join the other group Right.*

MASON. [*To* WARDEN.] You're Sterling's broker.

WARDEN. No, not for over a year.

MASON. Then you can't tell me how deep he is in this Hudson Electric swindle?

WARDEN. Is he in it at all?

MASON. Yes, he says, deep.

WARDEN. I suspected it yesterday.

MASON. But what with — his wife's money?

WARDEN. That went fourteen months ago. I put him on his feet then, gave him some tips that enabled him to take this house with her mother, so that with his regular law business he ought to have done very well, but his living could not leave one cent over to speculate with.

MASON. [*To himself.*] Good God!

WARDEN. I know what you're afraid of.

MASON. No!

WARDEN. Yes. The reason I'm no longer

his broker is he was ashamed to let me know about his dealings.

MASON. But you don't mean you think he'd actually *steal!*

WARDEN. His *aunt's* money? Why not? *He did his wife's!*

MASON. Does he handle any one else's affairs?

WARDEN. I know he takes care of that Godesby woman's property.

MASON. And she wouldn't hold her tongue if a crash came!

WARDEN. Not for a minute! Is Miss Hunter suspicious?

MASON. Yes. Does Sterling realize that to-morrow he will most probably be a ruined cheat?

WARDEN. Very likely.

MASON. If he made up his mind to-night it was all up with him, he might do — what?

WARDEN. Run away with whatever money he has left, or kill himself. I don't know if he's enough of a coward for that or not. There's *one* hold on him — he loves his wife.

MASON. Which will make him all the more ashamed of discovery. Do you believe she suspects?

WARDEN. Not a bit. She loves him too dearly.

MASON. Can *we* do anything?

WARDEN. Nothing but watch him closely till the people go. Then force him to make a clean breast of it, so we can all know where we stand; how we can best protect his aunt from ruin and his wife and boy from public disgrace.

MASON. He is watching us.

WARDEN. He knows I know him; we must be careful. He's coming toward us. [*He then speaks*

in a different tone, but no louder.] You're certain of the trustworthiness of your information?

MASON. Absolutely. Every man left in that concern will be ruined before the 'Change closes after to-morrow. [STERLING *has joined them in time to hear the end of* MASON'S *speech.* MASON *continues.*] I am telling Warden what I told you about the Hudson Electric Company.

STERLING. Can't you talk of something pleasanter?

[BLANCHE *reënters at back. On her entrance all the men rise. The servants finish preparing the room for the tree.*

BLANCHE. I'm very sorry — I really can't let you men stay here any longer.

ALL THE MEN. Why not? How's that? [*Ad lib.*]

BLANCHE. You know we want to get this room ready for Santa Claus! Dick! [*She goes to her husband. All the men go out at back in a group led*

by WARDEN *and* MASON. *They are all talking and laughing.* BLANCHE *is left alone with her husband.*] What is this Aunt Ruth has been telling me about not being able to get some bonds from you?

STERLING. Oh, nothing. I forgot to send them up to her, that's all.

BLANCHE. But she says she sent three times.

STERLING. One time too late to get into the vault; and the other, her letter was mislaid — I mean not given to me.

BLANCHE. You haven't broken your word to me?

STERLING. What if I had?

BLANCHE. I would let the law take its course.

STERLING. You must love me very little.

BLANCHE. I *live* with you. First you robbed me of my respect for you; then you dried up my heart with neglect.

STERLING. And our boy?

BLANCHE. Your blood runs in his veins; your shame and disgrace would be a fearful warning to him. It might kill *me;* but never mind, if it *saved him.*

STERLING. Oh, well, I haven't broken my word! So you needn't worry. I've been honest enough.

BLANCHE. [*With a long sigh of relief.*] Oh! I hope so!

MRS. HUNTER. [*Appearing in doorway at back.*] The men are in the drawing-room — shall we come *here?*

BLANCHE. Yes, we'll bring the others, mother. Come, Dick.

[*She goes out with* MRS. HUNTER *at back.*

STERLING. [*Goes to door Right, opens it, and calls.*] Leonard!

[LEONARD *enters Right*

LEONARD. Yes, sir?

STERLING. Go up to my library at the top of the house, get a railroad guide you will find there, and bring it down and put it on the table in the hall just outside the drawing-room door.

LEONARD. Yes, sir.

STERLING. Then go to my room and pack my bag and dressing case. Do you understand?

LEONARD. Yes, sir.

[*The women are heard singing "Follow the Man from Cook's," and gradually coming nearer.*

STERLING. Be quick, and say nothing to any one.

LEONARD. Yes, sir.

[*He goes out quickly Right.* STERLING *goes up stage and stands beside the door at back as the women dance in, singing "Follow the Man from Cook's." They are led by* CLARA, *with* MRS. HUNTER *on the end.* BLANCHE *and* RUTH

follow alone, not dancing. The others dance around the chairs and CLARA *jumps on and off one of them ; this stops the rest, who balk at it.* STERLING *goes out at back. The* SERVANTS *enter Right.*

CLARA. I don't care for this dinner party at all. The women are all the time being chased away from the men! I prefer being with Mr. Trotter. Don't you, mama?

MISS SILLERTON. He doesn't seem able to give a dinner party any more without you to chaperone, Mrs. Hunter.

BLANCHE. Mother, how can you?

MRS. HUNTER. Oh, I don't know as it's *chaperoning!* I like Mr. Trotter very much.

MISS SILLERTON. But he's such a little cad. I tried to give him a lift, but he was too heavy for me.

CLARA. Oh, well, you ought just to pretend it's the money in his pocket makes him so heavy; then you'd find him dead easy.

[*Meanwhile the* SERVANTS *have arranged the table, taken out the extra leaves and made it square, and left the room. They now reënter, bringing in a gorgeously decorated and lighted Christmas tree. There is at once a loud chorus of delighted approval from the women. The* SERVANTS *place the tree in the centre of the table. The women who are sitting rise and come near to examine the tree.*

RUTH. What a beautiful tree, Blanche!

BLANCHE. The boy is to have it to-morrow morning — it's really *his* tree! [TOMPSON *brings in a large basket containing seven small stockings and six small boys' socks — very small stockings and very small socks. They are made of bright and*

different colors and are stuffed into absurd, bulgy shapes.] There's a name on each one. Come along now!

[*Taking out a little sock. The women crowd around the basket and each hangs a sock on the tree,* MISS GODESBY *and* CLARA *standing on chairs.*

CLARA. [*Reading the name on her sock.*] Oh! mine's for Mr. Mason. What's in it, Blanche?

BLANCHE. I really can't tell you. I asked the clerk where I bought it what it was for, and he said he didn't know; it was a "Christmas present."

MISS GODESBY. [*Laughing.*] Oh, I know the kind! Mine's for Howard Godesby. What's his present?

BLANCHE. A silver golf marker.

MISS GODESBY. But he doesn't play golf!

BLANCHE. Well, he ought to; it'll keep him young.

CLARA. It will be all right, anyway, Julia! *You* can give it away to some one next Christmas.

MISS SILLERTON. What's in Mr. Trotter's?

BLANCHE. Oh, that present has almost been my death! Men are so hard to find things for! I had put in a gold pencil for his key chain, but to-night while we were eating our oysters, I saw him show a beauty that his mother had given him this morning! So I whispered to Jordan between the soup and fish to change Mr. Ryder's name to Mr. Trotter's stocking, and put Mr. Trotter's name on the one that had a cigarette case in it. I sneaked a message down to Dick on my dinner card — was it all right? — and he sent back word during the game that Trotter only smoked cigars; so before the ices were passed I shuffled Mr. Trotter's and Mr. Mason's names, — I'd given Mason the cigar case, — and just as Jordan signalled to me the

transfer had been successfully effected, I heard Trotter casually observe he'd been obliged to give up smoking entirely — *doctor's orders!*

[*They laugh punctiliously, rather bored by* BLANCHE'S *long account.*

MRS. HUNTER. Isn't the tree stunning?

CLARA. [*Getting down from her chair.*] It makes the table look like one of Mr. Trotter's "informal little dinners."

MISS GODESBY. They say he has one of those men who arrange shop windows decorate his dinner table for him!

BLANCHE. The only time I ever dined with him I was really ashamed to go home with my dinner favor — it was so gorgeous! And there were such big bunches of violets in the finger bowls there wasn't room for your little finger.

MISS GODESBY. You never saw such a lot of

decoration! The game have ribbon garters on their legs, and even the raw oysters wear corsage bouquets! [*To* MRS. HUNTER.] I hope you don't mind what we're saying, Mrs. Hunter?

MRS. HUNTER. [*Offended.*] I must say I do mind very much. — [*A pause.*] — because — [*A second pause.*] — well, I am going to marry Mr. Trotter — [*All, not believing her, laugh merrily.*] You are all very rude!

MISS GODESBY. Not on the level! Not *Trotter!*

MISS SILLERTON. Not *really!*

BLANCHE. No, no, of course not!

[*She rings bell.*

MRS. HUNTER. But I *am!* And I thought here at my daughter's table, among my own friends (I was allowed to name the guests to-night), I could count on good wishes and congratulations.

[*There is a dead silence.*

[*The musicians, a band of Neapolitan players, enter and take their places in a recess at Left.*

BLANCHE. [*To the musicians.*] You may play. [*To* JORDAN, *who has brought in the Neapolitans.*] We are ready, Jordan.

[JORDAN *goes out at back.*

[RUTH *goes to* BLANCHE.

[*The guitars and mandolins begin a popular song.*

MISS GODESBY. [*To* MRS. HUNTER.] Oh, well, Mrs. Hunter, we were only codding! There's lots of good in Trotter, and I'm sure you'll bring it out. Good luck!

[*Shaking her hand.*

RUTH. [*To* BLANCHE, *aside.*] You won't allow this!

BLANCHE. Certainly not. [BLANCHE *crosses to her mother and they go to one side together;* BLANCHE *speaks in a lowered voice.*] You've amazed and

shocked me! I will not tolerate such a thing; we'll talk it over to-night.

[*She leaves her and returns to her guests,* MRS. HUNTER *standing where she is left, biting her lips and almost crying with rage and mortification.*

MISS GODESBY. [*Before the musicians, to* BLANCHE *as she joins her.*] I'm crazy about these men, Mrs. Sterling; they play so awfully well — especially that one with the lovely legs!

[JORDAN *pulls aside the curtains at back and all the men reënter except* WARDEN. *They all join hands and dance around the tree, singing with the musicians; they break, and go up to a side table, where everything to drink is displayed.* WARDEN *enters at this moment and motions to* MASON *and leads him down stage.*

WARDEN. There was a railway guide in the hall — that's what he went there for; he's *going to run away to-night.*

MASON. How'll we prevent it?

WARDEN. First, we must break up this party!

MASON. How?

WARDEN. I haven't quite thought yet. Go back to the others; send Jordan to me; don't lose sight of Dick. Jordan! [*He takes him aside.*] I want you to go out of this room for a minute, pretend to go upstairs, then come back and tell Mrs. Sterling, loud enough for the others to hear you, that Master Richard is very ill, and say the maid is frightened.

JORDAN. [*Hesitating.*] But —

WARDEN. [*Quickly and firmly.*] Do as I tell you. I am responsible for whatever happens.

[JORDAN *goes out at back. The men and women are laughing and talking about the sideboard.*

BLANCHE. Come now, everybody! Let's have the presents. Dick, you know you are to be Santa Claus.

[STERLING *looks nervously at his watch.*

STERLING. Just a minute, dear! Ned! [*Takes* WARDEN *to one side. The women move about the tree, hunting for their own names on the stockings on the table at the foot of the tree.*] Ned, I've been suddenly called out of town on business — must catch the eleven-twenty train. I don't want to break up the party, so you empty the tree, and when the time comes for me to go, I'll slip out.

WARDEN. And when your guests go?

STERLING. Oh, then you can explain for me.

[JORDAN *enters at back.*

JORDAN. [*To* BLANCHE.] Beg pardon, madam, but Master Richard is very ill.

BLANCHE. [*Alarmed.*] Richard!

JORDAN. Yes, ma'am, and Droves is very frightened, ma'am.

RUTH. Richard ill?

[*All give exclamations of surprise and regret and sympathy.*

BLANCHE. My little boy ill? Excuse me, I must go to him.

[*She hurries out at back.* RUTH *speaks to the musicians, who stop playing.*

STERLING. [*Moved.*] My boy ill — why, I can't — I can't —

WARDEN. "Can't" what?

STERLING. How can I go away?

WARDEN. Surely you won't let business take you away from your boy who may be dying.

STERLING. No! I won't go! I'll face it out! I can't leave my boy like this —

RUTH. [*Coming to* STERLING.] I'm going to take these women away; tell Blanche not to give them a thought. Their evening up to now has been charming.

[*During* RUTH'S *speech,* WARDEN *has spoken aside with* MASON.

WARDEN. [*Aside to* MASON.] Don't let Miss Hunter go.

RUTH. [*To the other guests.*] Come to the drawing-room.

MRS. HUNTER. I was crazy to see what was in my stocking.

[*All pass out talking, expressing conventional sympathy on account of* RICHARD, *but evidently resenting the breaking up of the party.* STERLING *and* WARDEN *are left alone in the*

room. STERLING *moves to go up to back;* WARDEN *interrupts him.*

WARDEN. [*To* STERLING.] Where are you going?

STERLING. To my boy and my wife.

WARDEN. Wait a minute; I want to speak to you.

STERLING. Speak to me later; I can't wait now.

BLANCHE. [*Off stage, at back, excitedly.*] Jordan! [*She enters, excited, half hysterical.*] Jordan! Where is Jordan? It was a lie! What did he mean? Richard is sleeping sweetly. The maid knows nothing of being alarmed! Where is Jordan?

[*She starts to go toward the door Right.*

WARDEN. [*Stops her.*] Mrs. Sterling, he had nothing to do with it! *I* told Jordan to say what he said.

[BLANCHE *turns and looks at* WARDEN *in astonishment.*

STERLING. [*Stunned and at once suspicious.*] What?

BLANCHE. But —

WARDEN. Forgive me for so cruelly alarming you; it was the only way I could think of for getting rid at once of your guests!

STERLING. [*Angry.*] You'll interfere once too often in the affairs of this house.

BLANCHE. [*Indignant.*] But what excuse can you make, Mr. Warden?

WARDEN. Will you be so good as to ask Miss Hunter and Mr. Mason to come here? They will explain what I have done, partly, and your husband will tell you the rest when you come back.

[STERLING *sneers aloud.*

BLANCHE. I don't understand, I don't understand.

[*She goes out at back.*

STERLING. Well, I *do* understand, at least enough.

WARDEN. Good! That spares me a very disagreeable speech.

STERLING. No, it doesn't! Come out with it! What is it you want? What is it you've found out?

WARDEN. From betraying a trust, you've come, in less than two years, to an outright embezzlement.

STERLING. Speak out — give us facts!

WARDEN. You've stolen your aunt's fortune.

STERLING. *Prove that!*

WARDEN. It's *her money* that's lost in the Hudson Electric Company!

STERLING. PROVE IT!

WARDEN. Easy enough, to-morrow.

STERLING. You've got to excuse your action *to-night* or *be kicked* out of my house!

WARDEN. [*Strong.*] Isn't what I say the truth?

STERLING. [*Equally strong.*] No! And now get out!

WARDEN. [*Looks at his watch.*] I'll not leave this house till it's too late for you to take that eleven-twenty.

STERLING. [*More ugly.*] Yes, you will and mighty —

WARDEN. *No, I'll not!*

[*He is interrupted by the entrance of* BLANCHE, RUTH, *and* MASON.

WARDEN. [*To* BLANCHE.] I *hope* you forgive me now —

BLANCHE. [*Pathetically.*] You did right; I thank you.

STERLING. [*Heartbroken.*] Blanche — without hearing a word from me!

BLANCHE. No, I've come now to hear what *you* have to say.

[*A deep-toned clock strikes eleven.* STERLING, *at the second stroke, takes out his watch with a hurried movement.*

WARDEN. [*Quickly.*] Eleven o'clock.

STERLING. I wish Warden to leave the room.

BLANCHE. [*Firmly.*] And I wish him to stay.

[*A short pause.*

STERLING. Well, of what am I accused?

WARDEN. Nobody wants to accuse you. We want you to make a clean breast of it.

STERLING. Don't you talk to me; let my wife do the talking if you want me to answer.

BLANCHE. Sit down, Aunt Ruth. [RUTH *sits by the table,* WARDEN *stands at back.* STERLING *stands*

at Right and BLANCHE *and* MASON *sit near the centre.*] Aunt Ruth asks you to give her a true account of her trust in you. Mr. Mason is here as her friend and my father's.

STERLING. I haven't said I betrayed her trust. I told her she should *have* the bonds she wants to-morrow.

BLANCHE. But *will* she? That's what I want to know. I ask you if you haven't her bonds, to tell us here now, — tell *us*, who have been and must be still the best friends, perhaps the only friends, you can have. Tell us where we all stand — are we the only ones to suffer or are there others who will perhaps be less generous in their treatment of you? Tell us now while there is time perhaps to save us from public scandal, from the disgrace which would stamp your wife as the wife of a thief, and send your boy out into the world

the son of a convict cheat. [*She breaks down, but in a moment controls herself. There is no answer.* STERLING *sinks into a chair, his arms on the table, his head on his arms. A moment's silence.*] You *love* me — I know that. I appeal to your love; let your love of me persuade you to do what I ask. I ask it for your sake and for *mine!* Tell us here the truth now — it will spare me much to-morrow, perhaps — me whom you love — for love of me —

STERLING. [*In an agony.*] I'm afraid I'll lose you —

BLANCHE. No, I'll promise to stand by you if you'll only tell *us all* the truth.

STERLING. [*In a low, shamed voice.*] I'll tell *you*, but not *now* — not before all these others.

[BLANCHE *looks up questioningly to* MASON.

MASON *shakes his head.*

BLANCHE. It *must* be *now*, Dick.

STERLING. No! no! I can't look you in the face and tell it! Let me tell it to you *alone*, later, in the dark.

[BLANCHE *looks up questioningly to* MASON. *He shakes his head.*

BLANCHE. It must be now.

STERLING. No, no, I'm too ashamed, I can't face you; in the dark I'll make a clean breast of it — let me tell you in the dark.

[WARDEN *moves and puts his hand on the electric-light button beside the doorway at back.*

WARDEN. In the DARK, then, *tell it!*

[*He presses the button and all the lights go out. The stage is in complete darkness; only the voices are heard from the different places in which the actors are last seen.*

BLANCHE. [*Quickly.*] Remember, to help you

to help ourselves, we must know everything. Go on.

STERLING. It began fourteen months ago, after Ned Warden put me on my feet; I got a little ahead — why not get way ahead? There were plenty of men around me making their fortunes! I wanted to equal them — climb as high as they; it seemed easy enough for them, and luck had begun to come my way. We're all climbers of some sort in this world. I was a climber after wealth and everything it brings —

[*He stops a moment.*

BLANCHE. [*Her voice comes throbbing with pathetic emotion through the darkness.*] And *I* after *happiness* and all it brings.

STERLING. [*Deeply moved, his voice trembles for a moment, but only for a moment.*] Don't, Blanche, or I can't finish. Well, I borrowed on some of

Aunt Ruth's bonds and speculated — I made a hundred thousand in a week! I put back the bonds. But it had been so easy! I could see those bonds grinning at me through the iron side of the vault box. They seemed to smile and beckon, to *beg* me to take them out into the air again! They grew to be like living things to me, servants of mine to get me gold — and finally I determined to make one bigger coup than ever! I took Aunt Ruth's bonds out and all the money available in my trust, and put it *all* into this new company! It seemed so safe. I stood to be a prince among the richest! And, for a day or so, I've known nothing short of a miracle could save me from being wanted by the police! To-night I gave up even the miracle. That's all. It's no use saying I'm sorry.

[*A moment's pause.*

MASON. Have others suffered besides Miss Hunter?

STERLING. There is some money of Aunt Ruth's left — stock I couldn't transfer. But I used the money of others — Miss Godesby and Ryder's.

MASON. Miss Ruth, a large part of your fortune is gone, used unlawfully by this man. Will you resort to the law?

RUTH. [*Very quietly.*] No!

BLANCHE. [*In a voice broken with emotion and gratitude.*] Aunt Ruth!

MASON. We can't hope Miss Godesby and Ryder will be as lenient! You must go to them in the morning — tell them everything, put yourself at their mercy, ask for time and their silence.

STERLING. *Never!* I couldn't do it.

MASON. It is the only honorable way out of your dishonorable action — the least you can do!

STERLING. Confess to their faces, and probably go no good? Eat the dust at their feet, and most likely be clapped into prison for it? *No, thank you.*

BLANCHE. Suppose *I* went to them?

STERLING. You?

RUTH. No! Why should *you!*

STERLING. Yes! Why not? They might keep silent for *her!*

BLANCHE. I would do it for my boy's sake. Yes, *I'll* go.

STERLING. *Yes! You* go, Blanche.

RUTH. No, you *shan't* go — you shan't humiliate yourself in his place!

MASON. Certainly not; and if your husband is willing, we are not willing! *He* must go.

BLANCHE. But if he *won't?*

MASON. He *must!*

RUTH. You must demand his going, Blanche, and I demand it, too, as something due to me.

BLANCHE. Very well. I demand it. Will you go?

[*A moment's silence.*

WARDEN. Why don't you speak? [*He presses the electric button and all the lights come on.* STERLING *is at the doorway at back, about to steal out. There is an exclamation aloud from all of surprise and disgust. The clock strikes the quarter;* WARDEN *catches hold of* STERLING'S *arm.*] What's your hurry, Dick? There goes the quarter hour; you could never catch the eleven-twenty.

STERLING. Damn you!

[*Facing* WARDEN *squarely, as*

THE CURTAIN FALLS QUICKLY

ACT III

At "The Hermitage," on the Bronx River, the next afternoon. The house is on the Left, and on the Right and at the back are the green lattice arches. Snow lies thick everywhere, on the benches at the Right and on the little iron table beside it, on the swing between two trees at the Right, in the red boxes of dead shrubs, on the rocks and dried grass of a "rookery" in the centre, and on the branches of the trees. CLARA *comes out from the house, followed by* TROTTER.

CLARA. Come on and let mama rest awhile — naturally she's excited and tired out, being married so suddenly and away from home. [*She stops beside the swing, taking hold of its side rope with*

her hand.] It isn't every mother who can elope without her oldest child's consent and have her youngest daughter for a bridesmaid.

[*Laughing.*

TROTTER. I hope Mrs. Sterling will forgive me. Perhaps she will when she sees how my money can help your mother and me to get right in with all the smarties!

CLARA. Oh, don't you be too sure about your getting in; it isn't as easy as the papers say! But, anyway, that wouldn't make any difference to Blanche. She was never a climber like mama and me. I suppose that's why she is asked to all sorts of houses through Aunt Ruth that wouldn't let mama and me even leave our cards on the butler!

TROTTER. I thought your mother could go anywhere she liked.

CLARA. Oh, no, she couldn't! if she made you think that, it was only a jolly! Blanche is the only one of us who really went everywhere. Come along, "*Poppa*," give me a swing! I haven't had one for years!

[*She sweeps off the snow from the seat of the swing with her hand.*

TROTTER. Your mother certainly did represent —

CLARA. [*Sitting in the swing.*] Oh, well, now don't blame mama! She couldn't help herself; she always thought you *dreadfully handsome!* Swing me!

TROTTER. I don't care, anyway. I'm deucedly proud of your mother, — I mean of *my wife*, — and I'd just as lief throw up the whole society business and go off and live happily by ourselves.

CLARA. O dear! I think mama would find

that awfully dull. Go on, swing me! [TROTTER *swings her.*] Of course, you'll find mama a little different when you see her all the time. You really won't see much more of her, though, than you do now. She doesn't get up till noon, and has her masseuse for an hour every morning, her manicure and her mental science visitor every other day, and her face steamed three times a week! She has to lie down a lot, too, but you mustn't mind that; you must remember she isn't our age!

TROTTER. [*Swings her.*] She *suits* me!

CLARA. That's just what *I feel!* You'll take care of her, and me, too, all our lives, and that's what makes me so happy. I'm full of plans! We'll go abroad soon and stay two years. [*He has stopped swinging her.*] Go on, swing me!

TROTTER. [*Holding the swing still.*] Say! if you think you are going to run me and the whole

family, you're a Dodo bird! Remember that you're my daughter; you must wait a little if you want to be a mother-in-law.

[*Sleigh-bells are heard in the distance, coming nearer.*

CLARA. Good gracious! If you ask *me*, I think mama has got her hands full. What's become of Miss Godesby and her brother?

TROTTER. When you went upstairs with your mother, they went down the road.

CLARA. You know originally the idea was *I* was to marry you.

TROTTER. Really —

CLARA. [*Laughingly.*] Yes, and mama cut me out.

TROTTER. Oh, well, it can't be helped; we can't marry everybody.

CLARA. [*Noticing the bells.*] *Somebody else*

arriving! That's queer — nobody comes here in the winter; that's why we chose it, because it would be quiet! Let's play this game.

[*Going to an iron frog on a box which stands near the house.*

TROTTER. Perhaps it's Mrs. Sterling.

CLARA. No; if she was coming at all, she'd have come in time for the wedding. [*She takes up the disks which lie beside the frog.*] I should hate to get married like you and mama — no splurge and no presents! Why, the presents'd be half the fun! And think of all those you and she've given in your life, and have lost now a good chance of getting back.

[*Throws a disk into the frog's open mouth.*

TROTTER. *I'll* give your mother all the presents she wants. I can afford it; I don't want anybody to give us anything!

CLARA. You talk like Jess! [*Throws another disk.*] You know Jess earns her own living. She goes around to smart women's houses answering their invitations and letters for 'em. She calls it being a visiting secretary, but I tell her she's a *co-respon-dent!*

[*Throws a disk.*

[WARDEN *and* MASON *enter from behind the house quickly, with a manner of suppressed excitement. They are surprised to find* CLARA *and* TROTTER.

WARDEN. Why, here they are!

MASON. No, only Miss Clara and Trotter.

WARDEN. Lucky I met you — you must take me back in your sleigh.

MASON. Yes, the riding's beastly.

TROTTER. Hello! I say, were you invited?

CLARA. Merry Christmas!

WARDEN. We came to see the Godesbys.

CLARA. They've gone down the road.

MASON. Sterling isn't here, is he?

TROTTER. No, haven't seen him.

CLARA. Do you know *why* we're here?

[MASON *and* WARDEN *are embarrassed.*

MASON. Yes — er — er — a — many happy returns, Mr. Trotter.

TROTTER. It's a great day for me, Mr. Mason!

WARDEN. Wish you joy, Trotter!

[*Embarrassed and not going near him.* TROTTER *rushes eagerly to him and grasps his hand warmly.*

TROTTER. Thank you, old man! I say! *Thank you!*

MASON. Miss Clara, would you do me the great favor of going down the road and hurrying the Godesbys back if you see them?

CLARA. Yes, I don't mind; come along, Trotty!

WARDEN. You must excuse Trotter. I want a talk with him if he will give me five minutes.

CLARA. Oh, certainly.

[*She goes out Left behind the house.*

WARDEN. [*To* MASON.] Will you see Mrs. Hunter?

TROTTER. I beg your pardon, Mrs. *Trotter!*

WARDEN. [*Politely.*] I beg yours. [*To* MASON.] See Mrs. Trotter.

MASON. [*Aside to* WARDEN.] You're going to ask *him* to go on Dick's note for Ryder?

WARDEN. [*In a low voice.*] Yes.

MASON. You're a wonder! As if *he* would!

WARDEN. *Somebody must*, and there's nobody else. That boy and that mother have got to be saved!

MASON. I'm sorry my name's no good for us.

WARDEN. And mine mustn't be used.

MASON. No, indeed! The minute that was done, there'd be a new complication, and more trouble would tumble down on Mrs. Sterling's head. Good luck.

[*Shakes his hand and enters the house.*

TROTTER. What's up? *You* haven't come to kick about my wedding, have you? I wouldn't stand for that, you know!

WARDEN. It's not that, Mr. Trotter. Your wife's son-in-law, Sterling, has turned out a blackguard; he has had intrusted to him Miss Ruth Hunter's money and several other people's, and he's used it all for speculation of his own.

TROTTER. Then he's a damned thief!

[*He sits on the bench with the manner that he has settled the subject.*

WARDEN. So he is, and he's ruined.

TROTTER. Well, prison is the place for *him.*

WARDEN. We won't argue that, but how about his family — they get punished for what he has done; they must share his disgrace.

TROTTER. Oh, well, my wife is out of all that now — *she's Mrs. Trotter.*

WARDEN. Yes, but *her own daughter* suffers.

TROTTER. [*On the defensive.*] She isn't very chummy with her classy eldest daughter.

WARDEN. Never mind that; you know without my telling you that Mrs. Sterling is a fine woman.

TROTTER. She's always snubbed me right and left, but, by George, I must own she is a fine woman.

WARDEN. That's right! [*Clapping him on the back and putting his arm around his shoulder.*] Look here — help us save her!

TROTTER. How?

WARDEN. Indorse a note of Sterling's to give Ryder to keep him quiet.

TROTTER. I'd have to ask my wife.

WARDEN. No! Don't start off like that! Keep the reins in your own hands at the very beginning, — make her realize from this very day that you're raised up on the cushion beside her; that she's sitting lower down admiring the scenery, while you do the driving through life!

TROTTER. [*Half laughing.*] Ha! I guess you're right. Box seat and reins are good enough for me!

WARDEN. Good boy! Then we can count on you to sign this note?

TROTTER. Where's *my* security?

WARDEN. I can get you security if you want it.

TROTTER. Of course I want it! And I say where are *you?* Why aren't *you* in it?

WARDEN. There are reasons why my name had better not appear; you are in the family. But I'll tell you what I'll do, Trotter; I'll secure *you* with a note of my own — only you must keep it dark; you mustn't even let Mason know.

TROTTER. All right, perhaps I'm a Dodo bird, but I'll do it. Say, I seem to have married a good many of this classy family!

WARDEN. Trotter, no one's done you justice! And, by George! you deserve a better fate — er — I mean — my best wishes on your wedding day.

[TROTTER *shakes his hand delightedly.*

TROTTER. Great day for me! What I wanted was style and position, and some one classy who would know how to spend my money for me!

WARDEN. Well, you've got *that, surely!*

[CLARA *comes back from the house.*

CLARA. The Godesbys are coming. Trotter,

there's skating on the river near here, and they've skates in the house — don't you want a spin?

TROTTER. Yes, I don't mind — if my wife doesn't need me! [CLARA *laughs as* GODESBY *and* MISS GODESBY *enter from behind the house.* TROTTER *meets them, with* CLARA *on his arm.*] Excuse us for a little while!

CLARA. *Poppa* and I're going skating!

[*They go out Left.*

GODESBY. Hello, Warden.

WARDEN. Good morning, Miss Godesby.

MISS GODESBY. Good morning.

WARDEN. How are you, Godesby? I've come on a matter most serious, most urgent — something very painful.

GODESBY. What is it?

[*Comes forward.*

WARDEN. Both of you trusted Dick Sterling

MISS GODESBY. What's he done?

WARDEN. Misused your funds.

GODESBY. How d'you mean?

WARDEN. I mean that the money you intrusted to him is gone, and I've come to make a proposition to you.

MISS GODESBY. Gone?

[GODESBY *and* MISS GODESBY *are aghast. A second's silence, during which* GODESBY *and* MISS GODESBY *look at each other, then back at* WARDEN.

GODESBY. Do you mean to say —

WARDEN. The money is *gone*, every penny of it, and I want you to accept a note from Sterling to cover the amount.

MISS GODESBY. I can't *grasp* it!

GODESBY. Where is Sterling? Why didn't *he* come?

WARDEN. He was ashamed.

GODESBY. I should hope so!

WARDEN. Several of us are going to stick by him; we'll manage to put him on his feet again, and we want you to accept his note.

GODESBY. [*Incredulous.*] Accept his note?

MISS GODESBY. [*Also incredulous.*] On *what security?*

GODESBY. [*Quickly.*] You'll do nothing of the sort, Julia!

MISS GODESBY. I'll see him where he belongs, in State's Prison, first!

WARDEN. That wouldn't bring you back your money.

MISS GODESBY. Neither will his note!

WARDEN. If I get it indorsed?

GODESBY. Likely!

MISS GODESBY. Rather!

WARDEN. I want your silence to keep it from the public for the family's sake. I've secured a satisfactory indorser for a note to satisfy Ryder's claim.

MISS GODESBY. Why didn't you give him to *me* instead of Ryder?

WARDEN. I felt you would be willing, out of friendship —

[*There are sleigh-bells in the distance, coming nearer.*

MISS GODESBY. Huh! you must take me for an idiot!

WARDEN. Out of friendship for his wife.

MISS GODESBY. Blanche Sterling! I never could bear her! She's always treated me like the dirt under her feet!

WARDEN. You dined with her last night.

MISS GODESBY. That was to please her mother.

No, if my money's gone, Sterling's got to suffer, and the one slight consolation I shall have will be that Blanche Sterling will have to come off her high horse.

[*The sleigh-bells stop.*

GODESBY. [*To* MISS GODESBY.] Ten to one if you agree to sign this note —

WARDEN. And keep silent.

MISS GODESBY. [*Satirically.*] Oh, yes, of course, the next morning when I wake up Sterling will be gone! Nobody knows where!

WARDEN. I've had it out with Sterling! I am here as his representative. I give you my word of honor Sterling will not run away. It is under such an understanding with him that I am pleading his case in his stead. He will stay here and work till he has paid you back, every cent.

[JESSICA *enters hurriedly from the house.*

JESSICA. [*In great excitement.*] Mr. Warden, Mr. Warden, Dick has gone!

WARDEN. *Sterling? Gone?*

MISS GODESBY. *Gone?*

GODESBY. That's *good!*

WARDEN. Don't be a fool, Godesby. How do you mean "gone," Miss Hunter?

JESSICA. I don't altogether know. While I was out this morning, Blanche received a message from mother saying she'd been —

[*She hesitates, looking toward* GODESBY *and* MISS GODESBY.

WARDEN. They know. They're your mother's guests here.

JESSICA. She told Blanche they would be glad to have her here at one o'clock for breakfast. Blanche ordered the sleigh at once and went away, leaving word for me I was

to open any message which might come for her.

WARDEN. [*To* GODESBY.] Has she been here?

GODESBY. Not that I know of.

MISS GODESBY. [*Eager to hear more.*] No, no!

JESSICA. No, they say not. She probably went first to Aunt Ruth's. Before I got back, Dick, who'd been out —

WARDEN. He was at my house.

JESSICA. Yes. He came back, questioned Jordan as to where Blanche was, went upstairs, and then went away again, leaving a note for Blanche, which I found when I came home —

WARDEN. [*Eagerly.*] Yes?

JESSICA. It simply said, "Good-by. Dick."

MISS GODESBY. [*Very angry.*] Oh!

GODESBY. [*Quickly.*] He's taken a train! He's cleared out!

WARDEN. Do you know if he took a bag or anything with him?

JESSICA. No, he took nothing of that sort. Jordan went into his room and found a drawer open and empty, a drawer in which Dick kept — a *pistol!* —

[*She drops her voice almost to a whisper.*

WARDEN. Good God, he's shot himself!

JESSICA. Perhaps not — he left the house.

WARDEN. Yes, if he were really determined to shoot himself, why wouldn't he have done it there in his own room?

JESSICA. What can we do? What can we do?

WARDEN. I'll get Mr. Mason; he's with your mother; he must go back to town at once.

[*Going to the house.*

JESSICA. He can go with me; I'd better be at the house. Some one must be there.

WARDEN. Good!

[*He goes into the house.*

[MISS GODESBY *and her brother ignore and apparently forget the presence of* JESSICA *in their excitement. They both speak and move excitedly.*

MISS GODESBY. I ought to have suspected something when Sterling told me he was getting ten per cent for my money, — the blackguard!

GODESBY. I always told you you were a fool not to take care of your money yourself! You know more about business than most men.

MISS GODESBY. I didn't want to be bothered; besides, there was always something very attractive about Sterling. I don't mind telling you that if he had fallen in love with me instead of the stiff-necked woman he married, I'd have tumbled over myself to get him.

GODESBY. How do you feel about him now?

MISS GODESBY. Now! Thank God, I'm saved such a waking up! It's going to make a big difference with my income, Howard! I wonder if his wife knew he was crooked! I'll bet you she's got a pot of money stowed away all right in her own name.

JESSICA. [*Who can bear no more, interrupts.*] Please — please! Remember that you're speaking of my sister and that every word you are saying cuts through me like a knife.

MISS GODESBY. I beg your pardon; I ought to have thought. I like and respect you, Jess, and I've been very rude.

JESSICA. You've been more than that; you've been cruelly unjust to Blanche in all that you've said!

MISS GODESBY. Perhaps I have, but I don't

feel in a very generous mood; I've some excuse — so please forgive me.

[WARDEN *reënters Left.*

WARDEN. [*To* JESSICA.] Mason is waiting for you with the sleigh. He's going first to my house. Dick may have gone back there to hear the result of my interview with Ryder, — then Mason'll try his own house and Sterling's club.

GODESBY. The *police* are the best men to find Sterling, whatever's happened.

WARDEN. [*To* GODESBY.] You wait a minute with me; I haven't finished with you yet. [*To* JESSICA.] I'll stay here for your sister, in case she comes.

[JESSICA *goes out Left.*

GODESBY. [*To* MISS GODESBY.] Don't you give in!

MISS GODESBY. Not for a minute! [*To* WAR-

DEN.] Don't you think, under the circumstances, the wedding breakfast had better be called off, and my brother and I go back to town?

WARDEN. Not till you've given me your promise, both of you, that you will keep silent about the embezzlement of your bonds for the sake of Mrs. Sterling and her son.

MISS GODESBY. [*Half laughs.*] Huh!

WARDEN. For the sake of her mother, who is your friend.

[*Sleigh-bells start up loud and die off quickly;* JESSICA *has gone.*

MISS GODESBY. Oh, come, you know what sort of friends we are, — for the amusement we can get out of each other. This is the case, — I trusted this man with my affairs. He was very attractive — I don't deny that; business with Dick Sterling became more or less of a pleasure — but that

doesn't cut any ice with me; he's stolen my money. To put it plainly, he's a common thief, and he ought to be punished; why should he go scot free and a lot of others not? You know perfectly well his note wouldn't be worth the paper it was written on; and, anyway, if he hasn't gone and sneaked out of the world, I won't lift my little finger to keep him from the punishment he deserves!

GODESBY. Good for you, Julia!

WARDEN. Don't you put your oar in, Godesby; just let this matter rest between your sister and me! She's always been known as the best man in your family.

GODESBY. You don't choose a very conciliatory way of bringing us around!

WARDEN. I'm not choosing any way at all; I'm striking right out from the shoulder. There

isn't time for beating round the bush! I'm pleading for the good name and honorable position of a perfectly innocent, a fine, woman, and for the reputation and unimpeded career of her son! And I make that appeal as man to man and woman!

MISS GODESBY. I have nothing to do with any one in this matter but Sterling himself, who has robbed me, and I'll gladly see him suffer for it!

WARDEN. Now look here, Miss Godesby, you belong to a pretty tough crowd in society, but I know at heart you're not a bad sort! What good will it do you? Granted even that you don't care for Mrs. Sterling, still don't tell me you're the kind of woman to take a cruel pleasure in seeing another woman suffer! I wouldn't believe it! You're not one of those catty creatures! You're a clever woman, and I don't doubt you can be a pretty

hard one, too, at times; but you're *just* — that's the point now — you're *JUST* —

MISS GODESBY. [*Interrupting.*] Exactly! I'm just, an eye for an eye! Sterling is a thief, let him get the deserts of one!

[*She sits on the bench determinedly.*

WARDEN. But you can't look at only one side! You can't shut your eyes to his wife's suffering, too, and she doesn't deserve it! Neither does her boy deserve to share his disgrace. [*He sits beside her.*] Why, you have it in your power to handicap that boy through his whole life by publishing his father a criminal; or you can give that boy a fair show to prove himself more his *mother's son* than his father's, and to live an honest — who knows — perhaps a noble life!

MISS GODESBY. I refuse to accept such a responsibility. Ryder —

WARDEN. [*Rises, interrupting her.*] Ryder's word is given to be silent.

MISS GODESBY. Well, that's *his* lookout.

WARDEN. You'll have many a heart wrench, I'll bet you! You'll have to run across the results of the harm you do to Mrs. Sterling and Richard day in and day out, year after year! I don't believe you realize what it means! Why, I know *you* can't bear to see a *dog* suffer! I met you last week on the street carrying a mangy, crippled brute of a little dog in your arms, afraid lest he'd get into the hands of the vivisectionists, and yet here you'll let a boy and his mother —

MISS GODESBY. [*Interrupts him, struggling against a tiny emotion which he has stirred.*] Stop Stop! I don't want you working on my feelings that way.

[*She rises and turns from him*

WARDEN. [*Follows her.*] I'm only knocking at the door of your heart. And now because it's opened just a tiny way, you want to shut it in my face again. Will you leave this woman's name fit for her to use? *Won't* you make that boy's life worth living to him?

MISS GODESBY. [*After a moment's pause, looks straight into* WARDEN'S *face.*] I'll tell you what I'll do. Get me some security, some sort of indorsement of Sterling's note —

WARDEN. If the man's only alive!

MISS GODESBY. And I'll hold my tongue.

WARDEN. How long will you give me?

MISS GODESBY. Oh, come, I can't have any monkey business! You must get me my security to-day.

WARDEN. To-day?

MISS GODESBY. Yes.

WARDEN. But —

MISS GODESBY. That's my last word.

GODESBY. Stick to that, Julia!

WARDEN. I shan't try to persuade her against that. Will you leave your sister alone with me a moment. Perhaps you'll see about your sleigh being ready to return to town.

GODESBY. I've no objection — if Julia wishes it.

MISS GODESBY. Yes, go on, Howard!

[GODESBY *goes out back of house.*

WARDEN. [*Left alone with* MISS GODESBY, *goes nearer to her.*] Look here! Will you accept *my* indorsement? Will *I* be all right?

MISS GODESBY. [*Incredulously.*] Certainly.

WARDEN. Then it's settled?

MISS GODESBY. You don't mean it!

WARDEN. I do.

MISS GODESBY. You'd be willing to lose —

[*A revelation comes to her.*] Oh — for *Mrs Sterling!* I see!

WARDEN. [*Very seriously.*] I *wouldn't.* I wouldn't see.

MISS GODESBY. And she's always been blackguarding me for my affairs with men! And all the time —

WARDEN. [*Interrupts strongly.*] Don't say any more, please, *Miss Godesby!* I only wish your brother had said that much instead of you.

MISS GODESBY. [*Disagreeably.*] So you're in love with Blanche Sterling?

WARDEN. No!

MISS GODESBY. Oh, come, don't tell a lie about it; that will only make it seem worse.

WARDEN. Well, suppose I were in love with her — what of it?

MISS GODESBY. Nothing; only, my dear Warden, that woman —

WARDEN. [*Interrupts.*] Wait a minute! You've got me in a corner, but knowing half the truth, you mustn't *guess* the whole. She is even more ignorant of my love for her than you were ten minutes ago! [MISS GODESBY *smiles and makes a little satirical exclamation.*] You don't believe that, but I'll *make* you. I'm going to tell *you* something I've never even told myself. I'm going to put you to a big test, because I've got to. Apparently, I can't help myself; but after all, somehow I believe in the human nature in you, and you've got it in your power to help or hurt the woman I love — I say those words aloud for the first time — the woman I love!

[*He has finished his speech in a lowered tone throbbing with controlled feeling.*

MISS GODESBY. [*Incredulously.*] You've never told her?

WARDEN. Never; and you show how little you really know her when you ask that question! She loves her husband.

MISS GODESBY. I'm not so sure about that!

WARDEN. I am, and I *love her.* But surely the silent love of a man, like mine, is no insult to a good woman — cannot harm her! A love that is never spoken, not even whispered, can't hurt any one, except, perhaps, the one who loves. You must acknowledge even *you* have never heard a hint; you *showed* just now your real surprise at what circumstances revealed to you! I'd die sooner than bring the slightest shadow of a scandal on her, and I've hugged my secret tight. Have you any idea what such a love means? How it grows and grows, its strength shut in, held back,

doubling and redoubling its powers!—its ideality increasing, the passion *suppressed*, locked up! Good God! I tremble sometimes when I think — suppose some day it should burst out, *break* my control, MASTER ME! [*A pause.*] And here, now, I've told *you;* I'm sorry, but I had to for *her* sake again. Will you help me keep my secret?

MISS GODESBY. [*After a second's pause.*] Yes, because I believe you.

WARDEN. And Mrs. Sterling?

MISS GODESBY. [*Slowly, with sincere meaning.*] I envy her!

[*Her voice breaks and she turns away from him.*

WARDEN. No one is to know I indorse Sterling's note?

MISS GODESBY. You needn't sign the note; my brother'd have to see it. I'll take your word for the indorsement.

[*She offers him her hand. They shake hands.*

WARDEN. What a brick you are! You know you don't do yourself anything like justice in the world!

[GODESBY *reënters Left and after him a* MAN SERVANT *in ordinary clothes, who passes through the archway at back Centre.*

GODESBY. Ready!

WARDEN. [*Aside to her.*] You can promise his silence about Sterling?

MISS GODESBY. Oh, yes, he's absolutely dependent upon me.

WARDEN. Thank you.

MISS GODESBY. [*To* NED *with a forced gaiety.*] Good-by!

WARDEN. [*Again shaking her hand.*] Good-by.

[*He looks his thanks at her.*

GODESBY. Well? What did you do?

MISS GODESBY. [*As they go.*] Don't worry; I've taken care of myself for many years, and I still feel up to it!

[*They go out Left and at the same time the* SERVANT *enters from the archway at back Centre carrying some fire logs in his arms. This* SERVANT *speaks with a slight French accent. As he reaches the house,* WARDEN *stops him with a question, and the* GODESBYS' *sleigh-bells start up and quickly die away. The sun begins to set.*

WARDEN. Have you an empty sitting room?

SERVANT. Yes, sair.

WARDEN. Warm?

SERVANT. I will soon arrange a fire.

WARDEN. I wish you would, please.

SERVANT. Ze big room for ze breakfast is altogether ready and warm; you will be able to go in there now.

WARDEN. No, that wouldn't do. It's all right out here for *me*, only I am expecting a lady.

[*Sleigh-bells are heard in the distance, coming quickly nearer.*

SERVANT. Yes, sair.

WARDEN. I hear a sleigh coming. If a lady is in it, ask if her name is Mrs. Sterling, and if she says yes, tell her Mr. Warden is here and would like to speak with her a moment before she goes in to Mrs. —

[*He hesitates a second.*

SERVANT. Trottair?

WARDEN. Yes.

SERVANT. Yes, sair.

[*He goes into the house.*

[*The sun grows red, and the colors of sunset creep over the sky during the scene which*

follows. After a moment the SERVANT *shows* BLANCHE *out from the house.*

BLANCHE. [*Surprised and depressed.*] Good morning, Mr. Warden, have you been asked to these funeral baked meats?

WARDEN. No, I'll explain why I am here in a few minutes. Only let me ask you first when you last saw your husband?

BLANCHE. Early this morning.

WARDEN. And you have come just now from where?

BLANCHE. Aunt Ruth's. Of course you know about my mother? When I heard it I started to come here, but my heart failed me and I turned back to my aunt's. She has persuaded me that I ought to come and put the best face on the matter possible, but it seems as if I'd had now a little more than I *can* bear!

[*Her voice breaks and her eyes fill with tears.*

WARDEN. [*Almost tenderly.*] Shall we go inside?

BLANCHE. No, no! Let us stay out in the air; my head would burst in one of these close little rooms. Have you seen mother?

WARDEN. No, not yet.

BLANCHE. Where is Dick? Did he go to Ryder's?

WARDEN. No, but I have some good news to tell you all the same — Ryder has promised silence.

BLANCHE. [*With tremendous relief.*] Oh! that's too good, too good to be true! To whom did he promise?

WARDEN. I want you not to ask me that.

BLANCHE. I can guess, it was —

WARDEN. [*Lying.*] No, it was — *Mason.*

BLANCHE. [*Doubting him.*] Mr. Mason?

WARDEN. And I've more good news for you,

Mrs. Sterling — the *Godesbys*, too; *they* will be silent.

BLANCHE. You're sure?

WARDEN. We have their word!

BLANCHE. [*Pointedly.*] Mr. Mason again? — [WARDEN *bows his head in assent.*] He was *here?*

WARDEN. Some time ago, but only for a minute. He didn't stay; he went to find your husband.

BLANCHE. But the *Godesbys?* I just met them now on the road going back. How could Mr. Mason, if he didn't stay — [WARDEN *is embarrassed, and is silent, searching a way out of it.*] Oh, no! no! it wasn't Mr. Mason! I see the whole thing clearly. Dick was too great a coward, and *you* did it! It was *you* who won over Ryder! It was *you* who persuaded the Godesbys! — [WARDEN *shakes his head and makes a movement to deny it.* BLANCHE *continues speaking, the*

words rushing to her lips, as her pent-up heart opens and lets all her emotions suddenly free.] Don't try to deny it; you can't make me believe you! It's to *you* I owe whatever promise the future has for me! It is *you* who have given me all the happiness I've had for years. It is *you* who have watched over, taken care of, me—*you*, the best friend any woman in this world ever had. It is *you* now who have saved my boy's honor. It is *you* who lift the weight off my shoulders, the weight off my heart! You! — you! — you!

[*She sinks sobbing on the bench. It begins to snow very quietly and slowly.*

WARDEN. [*All his love bursting out into his face and into his voice, cries.*] Blanche! Blanche!

[*Leaning over her as if to protect her from her trouble and take her to his breast.*

BLANCHE. [*Rising and looking straight into*

his eyes with a suddenly revealed great love in her own.] Ned! —

[*They hold this position some moments, gazing into each other's eyes; then finally* WARDEN *makes a movement towards her, crying out more triumphantly, having read and realized her love for him.*

WARDEN. Blanche!

BLANCHE. [*Moving a half step back from him.*] No —

WARDEN. No?

BLANCHE. Look — look, it's beginning to snow!

WARDEN. [*Very softly.*] What do you mean?

BLANCHE. [*Desperately.*] I mean to speak of anything except what is in your thoughts at this moment! Help me not to forget that no matter what he has done, Dick is still my husband.

WARDEN. You don't know all he has done!

BLANCHE. How not "all"? What else? Where is he?

[*With a sudden new alarm.*

WARDEN. He has left you.

BLANCHE. [*Echoes.*] Left me? —

WARDEN. Mason is searching for him. He left a note at your house which Jess read; it was only one word "Good-by."

BLANCHE. [*Echoes again.*] Good-by! [*Sleigh-bells are heard in the distance, coming quickly nearer.*] What does it mean? You're hiding something from me! Tell me what else you know?

WARDEN. He left the house, but took something with him — something from a drawer in his room.

BLANCHE. [*After a second's pause she whispers.*] His pistol?

WARDEN. Yes.

BLANCHE. [*Aghast, still whispers.*] Has he done it?

WARDEN. I don't know; I'm waiting word from Mason.

[*The sleigh-bells stop.*

BLANCHE. [*Excited.*] But we can't wait here doing nothing; we must go, too!

WARDEN. Mason is doing all that can be done; we'd better wait here.

[*He takes her hand in sympathy, but without suggesting the passion of a few moments before.* STERLING *enters hurriedly Left. He is wild with drink and jealousy.*

STERLING. Drop my wife's hand!

[*They turn in great surprise.*

BLANCHE. Dick!

[*Fright at his appearance is mingled with her surprise.*

WARDEN. [*At the same time as* BLANCHE.] Sterling!

[*They do not drop hands.*

STERLING. [*Coming nearer, very strong.*] Drop my wife's hand! [*They do so quickly, not understanding yet.*] So I've *caught* you!

WARDEN. [*Angry.*] Caught us!

STERLING. Yes, I had my suspicions roused some time ago!

BLANCHE. Of what?

STERLING. *I* could go to the devil — what did *you two* care! I could go to State's Prison! All the better — *out of your way!*

WARDEN. You're speaking like a madman!

STERLING. I went back to my house this morning; my wife was gone — no message left where to! But I questioned the servant. She'd driven here! Why? Ha! [*A bitter half laugh;*

he turns to BLANCHE.] *You've come here once too often!*

WARDEN. [*Very strong.*] Sterling!

STERLING. [*To* WARDEN, *but ignoring his exclamation.*] Then I went to *your* house. *They knew* where *you'd* gone! You ought to train your servants better! *Both here!*

WARDEN. If you're not careful, I'll ram your insinuations down your throat.

STERLING. [*Jeers.*] "Insinuations?" I've caught you! I make no "*insinuations.*" I tell you *both you're caught!* You're my wife's lover, and she's your damned mis—

[*Interrupted.*

WARDEN. [*Seizing* STERLING *by the throat.*] Don't you finish!

BLANCHE. Sh! — for Heaven's sake! [*To* WARDEN.] Let him alone; I'm not afraid of what he says.

[WARDEN *leaves* STERLING.

STERLING. No, you never were a liar, I'll give you credit for that, — so confess the truth — you're his —

[*Interrupted.*

BLANCHE. [*Excited beyond her control.*] Listen! And you shall have the truth if you want it! These years that he's been befriending me I never dreamed of loving him nor thought of his loving me. [DICK *sneers.*] *Wait!* No, not even the day my father was buried, when I learned outright you were *dishonest!*

STERLING. [*Surprised.*] What do you mean?

BLANCHE. What I say — I learned it then from a paper of my father's. I shouldn't have kept my knowledge to myself — I see that now; but I did, for your sake, not for love of you — the love went for good that day. But here, a moment ago, I real-

ized for the first time that my old friend *did* love me, love me with an ideal devotion the noblest woman in the world might be proud of! I didn't tell him then I loved him, but now I take this chance, I *take it* GLADLY before you! — *forced by you!* I tell him now, what perhaps he has already guessed, I love him with all my heart — I *love him!* I LOVE HIM!

STERLING. Damn you both! then it's the *end* of *me!*

[*He pulls out a pistol and tries to put it to his temple.*

BLANCHE. [*Cries out.*] Ned!

WARDEN. [*Seizes* STERLING, *catches his arm, and wrenches the pistol from him.*] So that's what you planned to do, is it — make a wretched scene like that?

[*It begins to snow more heavily.*

STERLING. [*In utter collapse and shame.*] Why did you stop me? I'm better out of the world. I'm crazy with shame. First I disgraced and now I've insulted — *degraded* — the only living thing I care for, — that's my wife.

[*A moment's pause.*

BLANCHE. [*Speaks quietly.*] Come back to the house. Mr. Mason is looking for you; he has something to tell you.

STERLING. I know — more bad news.

BLANCHE. No, good.

STERLING. [*Echoes.*] Good! [*Starting to go, he turns at the porch.*] I want *you* to know that *I* know I'm a rotten beast.

[*He goes out Left.*

WARDEN. You're going back *home?*

BLANCHE. "*Home!*" [*With a faint smile.*] I should hardly call it that.

WARDEN. [*Aside to her.*] You're not afraid?

BLANCHE. [*Half smiling.*] Oh, no! And my boy's there.

[*The thick falling snow almost hides them, but they are unconscious of it.*

WARDEN. What's to be done?

BLANCHE. Wait; we'll see — we'll see — let it be something we could never regret. Good-by, Ned.

[*Giving him her hand.*

WARDEN. Good-by, Blanche.

[*Kissing her hand very tenderly and almost with a certain kind of awe, as*

THE CURTAIN SLOWLY FALLS

ACT IV

The following morning; at the STERLINGS'; *the library; a warm, livable, and lovable room, full of pictures, photographs, and books; mistletoe and holly decorate everywhere. In the bow-window at back there is a large bird-cage with half a dozen birds in it. The furniture is comfortable and heavily upholstered. At Left there is a fireplace with logs ready, but the fire is not lit. There a big table near the centre, full of magazines, illustrated papers, and books. A big arm-chair is beside the table, and other chairs conversationally close. There is a table near the door at Right, piled with Christmas gifts, still wrapped in white paper; they are tied with many*

colored ribbons and bunches of holly. There are doors Right and Left. After the curtain rises on an empty stage, RUTH *enters quickly; while she has her buoyant manner, she is, of course, more serious than usual. She carries a bunch of fresh violets in her hand. She looks about the room with a sort of curiosity. She is waiting for some one to appear. She takes up a silver-framed photograph of her brother which stands on a table and speaks aloud to it.*

RUTH. I'm glad you're spared this. [*With a long-drawn breath she places the photograph back upon the table and turns to greet* BLANCHE, *who comes in Right.*] Good morning, my dear.

[*She kisses her.*

BLANCHE. Good morning. You've had my note? [RUTH *nods.*] Thank you. I wanted to

see you before I saw any one else. You must help me decide, only *you* can.

RUTH. Have you seen your husband this morning?

BLANCHE. No. He sent word he was feeling ill, but would like to see me when I was willing.

RUTH. And you?

[*They sit near each other.*

BLANCHE. I don't want to talk with him till I see more clearly what I am going to do.

RUTH. Mr. Warden told me last night all that happened at "The Hermitage." But on your ride home with Dick?

BLANCHE. We never spoke. [*She rises.*] Aunt Ruth, I am going to leave him.

RUTH. [*Rising.*] No!

BLANCHE. [*Walking up and down.*] Why not? *Everybody* does.

RUTH. [*Going to her.*] That's just it. *Be somebody!* Don't do the easy, weak thing. Be strong; be an example to other women. Heaven knows it's time they had one!

[MRS. HUNTER *enters Right.* BLANCHE *meets her.*

MRS. HUNTER. Good morning, my poor dear.

[*Going to kiss* BLANCHE.

BLANCHE. [*Taking* MRS. HUNTER'S *hand and not kissing her.*] Good morning.

MRS. HUNTER. Clara's gone upstairs to see little Richard. Good morning, Ruth.

[*She adds this with a manner of being on the defensive.*

RUTH. [*Dryly.*] Good morning.

MRS. HUNTER. [*Sitting by the table and looking at the picture papers.*] Isn't it awful! What are you going to do?

BLANCHE. I don't know yet, mother.

MRS. HUNTER. *Don't know?* Absolute divorce — no legal separation! [*To* RUTH.] We're staying at the Waldorf.

[BLANCHE *sits discouragedly on the sofa.*

RUTH. [*Sitting beside her.*] I shall advise against, and do everything in my power to prevent, Blanche's getting a divorce!

MRS. HUNTER. You don't mean to say you'll carry those ridiculous notions of yours into practice? — now that a scandal has come into our very family?

RUTH. Oh, I know selfish, cynical, and worldly people won't agree with me, and I pity and sympathize with Blanche from the bottom of my heart. [*Taking and holding* BLANCHE'S *hand.*] But I want her not to decide anything now; wait till the first blows over, and then — well, then I

feel sure she will do the strong, noble thing — the difficult thing — not the easy.

BLANCHE. [*Withdraws her hand from* RUTH'S.] *No*, you ask too much of me, Aunt Ruth; I can't do it.

RUTH. I say don't decide now — wait.

BLANCHE. I don't want to wait. I want to decide now and to cut my life free, entirely, from Dick's.

RUTH. You used to agree with me. I've heard you decry these snapshot, rapid-transit, tunnel divorces many a time. I've heard you say when a woman has made her bed, she must lie in it — make the best of her bad bargain.

BLANCHE. I always sympathized with a woman who sought a divorce in this state.

RUTH. Oh, yes, but *you can't*, can you?

BLANCHE. No, but I'm not strong enough to fight out an unhappy life for the sake of setting an

example to other women — women who *don't want* the example set!

RUTH. Blanche, I counted on you to be strong, to be big —

BLANCHE. [*With a voice full of emotion.*] But I love Ned Warden. He loves me — life stretches out long before us. Dick has disgraced us all. I don't love him — should I give *my* happiness and Mr. Warden's happiness for *him?*

MRS. HUNTER. Absurd! We all have a right to happiness if we can get it. I have chosen; let Blanche follow my example.

BLANCHE. [*Disgusted.*] *Yours?* [*Rises.*] Oh!

RUTH. [*Following up the advantage.*] Yes, Blanche, do you want to follow your mother's example?

BLANCHE. No! But the cases are not analogous!

MRS. HUNTER. Not what? You needn't fling any innuendoes at Mr. Trotter; it's he who said it was my duty to stand by you, advise you, and all that sort of thing. I'm not here to please myself! Goodness knows, a divorce court isn't a very pleasant place to spend your honeymoon!

BLANCHE. Thank both you and Mr. Trotter, mother; but I ask you to allow Aunt Ruth and me to decide this matter between us.

MRS. HUNTER. Trotter says *divorce* was *made* for woman!

RUTH. And what was made for man, please? Polygamy?

MRS. HUNTER. I don't know anything about politics! But I could count a dozen women in a breath, all divorced, or trying to be, or *ought* to be!

RUTH. And each one of them getting a cold shoulder.

BLANCHE. What of it if their hearts are warm — poor climbers after happiness!

RUTH. Believe me, dear, the chill spreads. You're going to be selfish?

MRS. HUNTER. She's going to be sensible.

[CLARA *enters Right.*

CLARA. Hello, everybody! I just saw Dick coming out of his room and I cut him dead.

BLANCHE. Clara!

RUTH. [*To* BLANCHE.] You've taken a certain responsibility upon yourself, and you can't shirk it.

BLANCHE. He isn't what I thought him!

RUTH. The day the sun shone on you as a bride, in God's presence, you said you took him for better for worse —

CLARA. Dear me, is that in it? The marriage service ought to be expurgated!

RUTH. [*To* CLARA.] I'm ashamed of you.

CLARA. That's nothing new!

BLANCHE. Aunt Ruth, let us talk some other time.

MRS. HUNTER. Oh, if we are in the way, we'll go!

[*Rises.*

CLARA. Yes, come on, let's go to Atlantic City.

MRS. HUNTER. No, I'd rather go to Lakewood.

CLARA. Oh, pshaw, Lakewood's no fun! I'm surprised you don't say go to Aiken, North Carolina.

MRS. HUNTER. Mr. Trotter says we can't leave town anyway while Blanche is in this trouble.

BLANCHE. Mother, please discuss your affairs somewhere else.

RUTH. And if I may be permitted to suggest, you will find Mr. Trotter's advice always pretty good to follow. That young man has better qualities than we have suspected. I have some-

thing to thank him for; will you be good enough to ask him to come and see me?

MRS. HUNTER. He will not go to your house with my permission. I shall tell him you have never asked me inside your door.

CLARA. Mother, if you ask *me* — [MRS. HUNTER *interjects* "Which I don't," *but* CLARA *continues without paying any attention to the interruption.*] — I don't think Mr. Trotter is going to cry himself to sleep for your permission about anything!

MRS. HUNTER. [*To* BLANCHE.] Good-by, my dear; if you want me, let me know; I'll be glad to do anything I can. I'm staying at the Waldorf.

CLARA. It's full of people from Kansas and Wyoming Territory come to hear the Opera!

RUTH. A little western blood wouldn't hurt our New York life a bit!

CLARA. Ah! Got you there! The west is the place where the divorces come from!

MRS. HUNTER. [*Laughs.*] What's the matter with Providence? I think Rhode Island tips the scales pretty even for the east!

BLANCHE. Please go, mother; please leave me for a little while.

MRS. HUNTER. Oh, very well, good-by! [LEONARD *enters Right with a Christmas parcel, which he places on the table Right.*] Dear me, have you had all these Christmas presents and not opened them?

BLANCHE. It is only little Richard in this house who is celebrating Christmas to-day.

MRS. HUNTER. It's a terrible affair; I only hope the newspapers won't get hold of it. [*To* LEONARD.] If any women come here asking for *me* who look like ladies, don't let 'em in! They ain't my friends; they're reporters.

[LEONARD *bows and goes out.*

CLARA. I'm awfully sorry, Blanche, I honestly am; but I think you'll have only yourself to blame if you don't strike out now and throw Dick over. Good-by!

[MRS. HUNTER *and* CLARA *go out Right.*

BLANCHE. I wish *they* wouldn't advise me to do what I *want* to.

RUTH. Ah!

BLANCHE. But who do I harm by it? Surely, it wouldn't be for *his* good to be brought up under the influence of his father!

RUTH. If he saw you patiently bearing a cross for the sake of duty, can you imagine a stronger force for good on the boy's character? What an example *you* will set him! What a chance for a mother!

BLANCHE. But my own life, my own happiness?

RUTH. Ah, my dear, that's just it! The watch-word of our age is self! We are all for ourselves; the twentieth century is to be a glorification of selfishness, the Era of Egotism! Forget yourself, and what would you do? The dignified thing. You would live quietly *beside* your husband if not *with* him. And your son would be worthy of such a mother!

BLANCHE. And I?

RUTH. You would be *glad* in the end.

BLANCHE. Perhaps —

RUTH. Surely! Blanche, for twenty years Mr. Mason and I have loved each other.

[BLANCHE *is astonished. There is a pause.*

[RUTH *smiles while she speaks, though her voice breaks.*]

You never guessed! Ah, well, your father knew.

BLANCHE. But Mrs. Mason is hopelessly insane; surely —

RUTH. A principle is a principle; I took my stand against divorce. What can you do for a principle if you don't give up everything for it? Nothing! And that is what I mean. To-day I am not sorry — I am happy.

[*There is another slight pause.* RICHARD *is heard upstairs singing a Christmas carol,* "*Once in Royal David's City,*" *etc.*

BLANCHE. [*With great emotion.*] But if it breaks my heart — if it breaks my heart?

RUTH. Hearts don't break from the pain that comes of doing right, but from the sorrow of doing wrong! [*Neither woman speaks for a minute; in the silence* RUTH *hears* RICHARD.] What's that?

BLANCHE. [*Hearing now for the first time.*] Richard singing one of his carols.

RUTH. I'd forgotten it *was* Christmas.

[LEONARD *enters Left.*

LEONARD. Doctor Steinhart is here to see Mr. Sterling. Where shall I show him, madame?

BLANCHE. Here; we'll go —

[*Rising.*

LEONARD. Yes, madame.

[*He goes out.*

RUTH. Well? What are you going to do?

BLANCHE. I'm *thinking* —

RUTH. May I come with you, or shall I —

BLANCHE. No, come.

[*The two women start to leave the room together Right, with their arms around each other. They meet* STERLING, *who enters; he starts, they stop.*

STERLING. I beg your pardon, I didn't know you were here.

BLANCHE. We are going to my room; I am sorry you are not well.

STERLING. Oh, it's nothing, thank you.

RUTH. If we can do anything, let us know.

STERLING. [*Overwhelmed with shame, bows his head.*] Thank you.

[*The women go out Right. At the same moment* DR. STEINHART *is shown in by* LEONARD *Left.*

DR. STEINHART. Good morning, Sterling.

STERLING. Good morning, doctor; sit down.

DR. STEINHART. No, thanks, I'm very rushed this morning. What can I do for you?

STERLING. I've been drinking too much for some time; I can't eat — my nerves are all gone to pieces. I've some — some business troubles, and I haven't slept for a week.

DR. STEINHART. Is that all! Brace up, help

yourself a little, and we can soon make a man of you.

STERLING. I'm afraid it would take more than a doctor to do that.

DR. STEINHART. Oh, come, we must get rid of melancholy. Come and drive with me to 79th Street.

STERLING. No, I'm too worn out. Look at my hand! [*Holds out a trembling hand.*] I tell you literally I haven't slept for weeks — I thought you'd give me some chloral or something.

DR. STEINHART. What? Now?

STERLING. Yes; I've tried sulphonal and all that rot; it doesn't have any effect on me. Give me a hypodermic —

DR. STEINHART. Nonsense! Come out into the air!

STERLING. I've *been* out.

DR. STEINHART. Good! Then try lying down again, and perhaps you'll go to sleep *now*.

STERLING. Very well, but give me something to take to-night in case I can't sleep then.

DR. STEINHART. [*Takes out a note-book and writes with a stylographic pen.*] Be careful what you eat to-day. How about this drinking — did your business trouble come after it began, or did the whiskey come after the business trouble?

STERLING. That's it.

DR. STEINHART. Um — [*Giving* STERLING *the paper which he tears out of his note-book.*] Look here, I've a busy day before me; but I'll look in to-morrow, and we'll have a good talk.

STERLING. Thank you. I say, what *is* this?

DR. STEINHART. It's all right. Sulphate of morphia — one-quarter-grain tablets.

STERLING. Isn't that very little?

DR. STEINHART. Oh, no; you try one, and repeat in an hour if it hasn't done its work.

STERLING. But you've only given me two tablets, and I tell you I'm awfully hard to influence!

DR. STEINHART. Two's enough; we don't give a lot of drugs to a man in a nervous condition like yours. Don't let them wake you for luncheon if you're asleep. Sleep's best for you. Good-by — pleasant dreams.

[*He goes out Left.*

STERLING. [*Reads off the prescription.*] "Two one-quarter-grain tablets sulphate of morphia, Wm. B. Steinhart — " And in *ink!* Why didn't he write it with a lead-pencil? How can I make it more? Two — wait a minute! Two! [*Taking out his own stylographic pen.*] What's his ink? [*Makes a mark with his pen on his cuff.*] Good! the same! Why not make it twelve? [*Marking*

a one before the two.] Just in case — I might as well be on the safe side!

[*He rings an electric bell beside the mantel, and waves the paper in the air to dry it.* BLANCHE *enters Right.*

BLANCHE. I heard the doctor go. Is anything serious the matter?

STERLING. *If* it were my *body* only that had gone wrong, Blanche!

[LEONARD *enters Left.*

[*To* LEONARD.] Take this prescription round the corner and have it put up.

LEONARD. Yes, sir.

STERLING. And bring it to me with a glass of water.

LEONARD. Yes, sir.

[*He goes out Left.*

[BLANCHE *is still standing.* STERLING *sinks into a chair, and puts his head in his hands, his*

elbows on the table. He lifts his head and looks at her.

STERLING. I know what you're going to do; you don't have to tell me; of course you're going to divorce me.

BLANCHE. No.

STERLING. What!

[*His hands drop to the table; he looks her straight in the face, doubting what he hears.*

BLANCHE. [*Looking back into his eyes.*] No.

STERLING. [*Cries.*] Blanche!

[*In a tone of amazement and joy.*

BLANCHE. I give you one more chance, for your sake *only as my boy's father.* But — *don't make it impossible for me* — do you understand?

STERLING. Yes! I must take the true advantage of this chance your goodness gives me. I must right myself, so that people need not hesitate to

speak of his father in Richard's presence. *And this I will do.* [*With great conviction he rises.*] I know I am at the cross-roads, and I know the way; *but* I don't choose it for *your* reasons; I choose for my own reason — which is that, unfit as *I am, I love you.*

[*He speaks deliberately and with real feeling, bending over her.*

BLANCHE. I tell you truly my love for you is gone for good.

STERLING. I'll win it back — you *did* love me, you *did*, didn't you, Blanche?

BLANCHE. I loved the man I thought you were. Do you remember that day in the mountains when we first really came to know each other, when we walked many, many miles without dreaming of being tired?

STERLING. And found ourselves at sunset at the

top instead of below, by our hotel! Oh, yes, I remember! The world changed for me that day.

[*He sinks back into the arm-chair, overcome, in his weakened state, by his memories and his realization of what he has made of the present.*

BLANCHE. And for me! I knew then for the first time you loved me, and that I loved you. Oh! how short life of a sudden seemed! Not half long enough for the happiness it held for me! [*She turns upon him with a vivid change of feeling.*] Has it turned out so?

STERLING. How different! Oh, what a beast! what a fool!

BLANCHE. [*Speaking with pathetic emotion, tears in her throat and in her eyes.*] And that early summer's day you asked me to be your wife! [*She gives a little exclamation, half a sob, half a laugh.*] It was in the corner of the garden; I can

smell the lilacs now! And the raindrops fell from the branches as my happy tears did on father's shoulder that night, when I said, "Father, he will make me the happiest woman in the world!"

STERLING. O God! to have your love back!

BLANCHE. You can't breathe life back into a dead thing; how different the world would be if one could!

STERLING. You can bring back life to the drowned; perhaps your love is only drowned in the sorrow I've caused.

BLANCHE. [*Smiles sadly and shakes her head; the smile dies away.*] Life to me then was like a glorious staircase, and I mounted happy step after step led by your hand till everything *seemed* to culminate on the day of our wedding. You men don't, *can't* realize, what that service means to a girl. In those few moments she parts from all

that have cherished her, made her life, and gives her whole self, her love, her body, and even her soul sometimes — for love often overwhelms us women — to *the* man who, she believes, wants, *starves*, for her gifts. All that a woman who marries for love feels at the altar I tell you a *man* can't understand! You treated this gift of mine, Dick, like a child does a Santa Claus plaything — for a while you were never happy away from it, then you grew accustomed to it, then you broke it, and now you have even lost the broken pieces!

STERLING. [*Comes to her, growing more and more determined.*] I will *find* them, and put them together again.

BLANCHE. [*Again smiles sadly and shakes her head.*] First we made of *every Tuesday* a festival — our wedding anniversary. After a while we kept the twenty-eighth of *every month!* The second

year you were satisfied with the twenty-eighth of April only, and last year you forgot the day altogether. And yet what a happy first year it was!

STERLING. Ah, you see I *did* make you happy once!

BLANCHE. Blessedly happy! Our long silences in those days were not broken by an oath and a fling out of the room. Oh, the happiness it means to a wife to see it is hard for her husband to leave her in the morning, and to be taken so quickly — even roughly — into his arms at night that she knows he has been longing to come back to her. Nothing grew tame that first year. And at its end I climbed to the highest step I had reached yet, when you leaned over my bed and cried big man's tears, the first I'd ever seen you cry, and kissed me first, and then little Richard lying on my warm arm, and said, "God bless you, little mother." [*There is a pause.* BLANCHE *cries softly a moment.* STERLING

is silent, ashamed. Again she turns upon him, rousing herself, but with a voice broken with emotion.] And what a *bad* father you've been to that boy!

STERLING. I didn't mean to! That's done, that's past, but Richard's my boy. I'll make him proud of me, somehow! I'll win your love back — you'll see!

[BLANCHE *is about to speak in remonstrance, but stops because of the entrance of* LEONARD. *He brings a small chemist's box of tablets in an envelope and a glass of water on a small silver tray.*

LEONARD. Your medicine, sir.

[*He puts it on the table and goes out Right.*

STERLING. Thank you, thank you!

[*He takes the box of tablets out of the envelope.*

BLANCHE. [*Going to him.*] *You don't realize* why I've told you all this!

STERLING. [*Counting out the tablets.*] One, two. To give me hope! To give me hope!

[*He empties the other ten tablets into the envelope, twists it up, and throws it in the fireplace.*

BLANCHE. No, no, just the opposite!

STERLING. Then you've defeated your end, dear; you will stay here with me.

BLANCHE. [*Trying to make him realize the exact position.*] Opposite you at the table, receiving our friends, keeping up appearances, yes — but nearer to you than that? No! Never!

STERLING. But you *will* stay?

[LEONARD *enters from Left.*

LEONARD. Miss Godesby, Mr. Warden.

[*They enter.*

[*All greet each other.* WARDEN *nods stiffly to* STERLING, *barely acknowledging his greeting.*

MISS GODESBY. [*To* STERLING, *purposely speak-*

ing with good-humored raillery to relieve the tension of the situation.] Well, you're a nice lot, aren't you?

STERLING. I'm so ashamed! I'm so ashamed!

MISS GODESBY. Oh, never mind that now.

BLANCHE. I have no words to thank you with.

MISS GODESBY. Oh, that's all right. The truth is, I've made Warden bring me here, Sterling, for a bit of business. I had an emotional moment yesterday and went off my head a bit. I stand by what I said as to keeping quiet, but — well, I'm like any other old maid who hates dust on her mantelpiece — I'm fidgety not to make some sort of a bluff at putting this thing on a business basis.

WARDEN. Excuse me, Miss Godesby, I think Sterling ought to know the truth.

STERLING. *Now* what?

MISS GODESBY. Well, the truth is, my fool of a

brother has kicked up an infernal row, and refuses to hold his tongue.

STERLING. Then I'm ruined after all!

MISS GODESBY. Wait, I've left him with Mr. Mason. I feel certain I can assure his silence if I can only show him some sort of an agreement to pay, an acknowledgment of the — the — affair, signed and sealed.

BLANCHE. Signed by whom?

MISS GODESBY. Your husband and yourself will do.

STERLING. But both names are worthless.

MISS GODESBY. Not as a point of honor.

STERLING. Ah! no, not my wife's.

MISS GODESBY. Nor yours to me. Come along!

[*She goes to the table with* STERLING, *and unfolding a paper gives it to him. He signs it.*

WARDEN. [*Aside to* BLANCHE, *apologizing for his presence.*] She made me come — she wouldn't come alone; otherwise I should have waited till you sent for me.

BLANCHE. It's as well — I've decided. Oh, I wonder if I'm doing wrong.

[*Looking him straight in the face.*

WARDEN. [*Looking back searchingly in hers to read the truth, but believing that she will certainly leave her husband.*] No, *you* can't do wrong! But I must warn you of one thing — I'm not any longer the controlled man I was.

MISS GODESBY. Come along now, Mrs. Sterling, brace up and give me your name, and Warden, witness, please. [*They do so.*] Of course, my dears, I know perfectly well that legally this isn't worth the paper it's written on. [*Exchanging a serious and meaning look with* WARDEN.] But my

idiot of a brother won't realize that, which is the point. One thing more — will you both dine with me next week, Thursday? [*There is an embarrassed pause, which, with quick intuition, she understands.*] Yes, you *will* — for *silence* gives consent! [*Laughing.*] Now, that's settled!

STERLING. What an awfully good sort you are!

MISS GODESBY. Thanks, not always — I've been a mucker more than once in my life! I must go [*Shaking hands with* BLANCHE.] and relieve Mr. Mason of my brother, or he'll be accusing me of inhuman treatment; more than one consecutive hour of my brother ought to be prevented by the police.

BLANCHE. You are very, *very* good.

MISS GODESBY. I think if you and I can get well over this, we'll be real friends, and I haven't many, have you?

BLANCHE. [*Takes her hand.*] You can count upon me and my boy so long as we live.

[*She impulsively but tenderly kisses her.*

[MISS GODESBY *is very much surprised, but moved.*

MISS GODESBY. [*Half laughing, half crying, and pulling her veil down to hide her emotion.*] By George! I haven't been kissed by a woman for years! Good-by.

[WARDEN *starts to go out with* MISS GODESBY. BLANCHE *stops him.*

BLANCHE. Wait one moment — I want to speak alone to Miss Godesby.

[MISS GODESBY *goes out Left.*

BLANCHE. [*Aside to* STERLING.] You tell him; I cannot. Tell him the *truth.*

[*She goes out after* MISS GODESBY

WARDEN. Dick.

STERLING. Ned?

WARDEN. I have nothing to say to you, Sterling.

[WARDEN *looks away and whistles a tune to show his unwillingness to listen.* STERLING *speaks clearly so* WARDEN *shall hear.*

STERLING. I have a message for you from my wife. [*There is a second's pause.* WARDEN *stops whistling and turns and looks at* STERLING.] She asks me to explain — to tell — to tell you a decision she has come to.

[*There is another pause.*

WARDEN. Yes?

[*Anxious, at a supreme tension, and now a little alarmed as to the decision.*

STERLING. She has decided not to leave my house.

WARDEN. [*Adds.*] *Yet!*

STERLING. *Ever!*

WARDEN. [*Losing his control.*] That's a lie!

STERLING. I couldn't believe it, either, when she told me. It was her first word to me to-day. I said, "You are going to divorce me," and she answered, "No."

WARDEN. She's sacrificing herself for some reason — her boy!

STERLING. Never mind, she won't leave me; I have her promise, and I'll win back her love!

WARDEN. You fool! You can't win her back! She would never have loved me if you hadn't disillusioned, *dishonored* her! I'm not worthy of her, but I'll never dishonor her, and, please God, never disappoint her, and so I'll keep her love.

STERLING. Well, as to that, she decides to stay, leaving love out of the question.

WARDEN. And you'll accept that sacrifice! You don't even *love* her. You're only thinking

of *yourself* now. Love, real love, forgets itself. You, after having spoilt half her life, are willing to spoil the rest, for *your own sake!*

STERLING. No, for the boy's sake, and her sake — to save a scandal — the world —

[*Interrupted*

WARDEN. [*Beside himself.*] Oh, damn the world! It's *heaven* and *hell* you'd better think of. *Scandal!* It couldn't harm *her*, and the hurt it would do you is a small price to pay. Those whom *God* has joined — yes! but it was the devil bound her to you!

STERLING. Here! I've had enough! Look out!

WARDEN. [*Moves toward him.*] *You* look out — you shan't rob her of her happiness. You — a drunkard! A forger! A thief!

STERLING. *I'd keep her now if only to spite you!*

WARDEN. Hah! There spoke the true man in you! Would to heaven the old days of duelling were back!

STERLING. A brave wish, as you know they're not!

WARDEN. They fight in other countries still for their love and honor, and I'm ready here, now, if you are, with any weapons you choose!

[STERLING *sneers.*]

Sneer! But will you fight? We'll find a place, and something to fight with, or fists if you'd rather! You wouldn't kill me before I'd got you out of her way for good. Will you fight?

[*Coming closer to him.*

STERLING. No!

WARDEN. [*Getting more and more enraged.*] If *you lose, you go away*, and set her free of your own will!

STERLING. *No!*

WARDEN. [*Losing entirely his self-control.*] What do you want to *make* you fight — will that?

[*He gives him a stinging blow in the face.*

STERLING. Yes!

[*He springs toward* WARDEN *as* RUTH *and* MASON *enter Left. The two men stand rigid,* WARDEN *breathing heavily.*

RUTH. Blanche, may I bring in — where's Blanche?

STERLING. I don't know.

MASON. Good morning, gentlemen.

[*There is no response.* WARDEN *is with great difficulty restraining himself. His lips are compressed tightly and his hands clenched.*

RUTH. What's the trouble?

STERLING. I have just told Warden my wife's decision not to leave me.

RUTH. [*Showing her relief and satisfaction in her face, turns to* WARDEN.] You won't try to shake that resolve?

WARDEN. [*Unable to control himself.*] But I will! I *will* — I tell you all! I hardly know what I say or do! But look out for me, I'm desperate! I'm a torrent that's only let loose since yesterday, and now all of a sudden you try to stop me! But it's too late; I've got my impetus; the repressed passion of years is behind me; nothing can stop me — and God keep me from doing the wrong thing! I am determined to clear him out of the way of the happiness of the woman I love. [*To* RUTH.] Do you mean to say you approve of her decision? [RUTH *turns her head; he turns to* MASON.] Do *you?*

RUTH. No.

STERLING. [*To* RUTH, *holding out his hand.*]

You will stand by me, Aunt Ruth, and together we —

RUTH. [*Interrupting and refusing his hand.*] Oh, no.

STERLING. Don't you think I can win her love back?

RUTH. No.

STERLING. Won't you help me try?

RUTH. No. It would be useless.

WARDEN. Come with me to Blanche; I must speak with her.

[WARDEN *and* RUTH *go out Right.*

MASON. [*Alone with* STERLING.] Go away and make your wife understand you are never coming back.

STERLING. But the loneliness, the misery, away — alone.

MASON. Kill them with hard work; ***you have***

other heavy debts, you know. I came to see you about this business of your acknowledgments to Miss Godesby and Miss Hunter.

STERLING. Later, later. To-morrow I will decide —

[*He motions him away.* MASON *goes to him and puts his hand on his shoulder.*

MASON. Decide well —

[*He hesitates a moment and then goes out Right.*

STERLING. [*Watching him go.*] There's not one soul in this world who cares for me, and it's my *own fault.* [RICHARD *is heard upstairs again singing "Once in Royal David's City."* STERLING *lifts his head and listens.*] Yes, one little soul loves me, and it would be better for him, too, if I went away. I'll go to sleep and see how I feel about it when I wake up. [*He moves the glass of water and takes out the box of tablets. He starts*

suddenly, but very slightly, and his muscles tighten.] After all, why not end it all *now*, at once, without any more bother? [*He looks in the box, and glances up questioningly; then he remembers the fireplace where he threw the other tablets and looks across the room at the logs. He rises, goes over, and sees in the fireplace the twisted envelope which holds the other tablets. He bends over to pick it up; he stops short.*] No! Why shouldn't I try it, anyway? She, herself, gives me the chance! [*He rings the electric bell, and walking away from the fireplace, takes up with a trembling hand the papers left by* MASON; *he wipes the damp from his forehead with his handkerchief. To* JORDAN, *who enters Left.*] Light the fire quickly; I feel cold.

[*He sinks into the arm-chair, weak from the mental strain.*

LEONARD. It's very warm in the house, sir.

STERLING. Do as I tell you — light the fire.

LEONARD. [*Looking for matches on the mantel, finds the box empty.*] There are no matches, sir; I must get one.

STERLING. No, don't go — here — here —

[*He gives him a match from his own box.* LEONARD *notices the trembling hand and suppressed excitement of* STERLING, *and involuntarily glances up, but quickly looks back to his work and strikes a match. The match goes out.*

LEONARD. I shall need another match, please, sir.

STERLING. [*With one in his fingers taken from his match-box, he alters his mind.*] I have no more. [*He puts away his match-box.*] Never mind the fire; get me a pint bottle of champagne.

LEONARD. [*With a surreptitious side glance of curiosity.*] Very well, sir.

[*He goes out Left.*

STERLING. That was funny; that was very funny! I wonder if it was accident, or if there's such a thing as fatality. [*He goes to the fireplace and picks up the twisted envelope.*] If not now — perhaps some other time — who knows? [*He thrusts the envelope in his vest pocket, and takes up the papers again from the table to look over them.*] I can't read these things! [*Throwing them down.*] The words mean nothing to me!

[*There is the sound outside of a cork being drawn.*

LEONARD *enters with the champagne and a glass and places them beside* STERLING.

LEONARD. Shall I light the fire now, sir?

STERLING. No, never mind now.

LEONARD. Yes, sir.

[*He goes out Left.*

[STERLING *half fills the glass with champagne.*

He takes out the box of tablets and counts aloud.

STERLING. One, two, three, four — [*He puts all in the glass, dropping them as he counts. He hesitates, then quickly drops in two more and drinks quickly. The glass is empty. He sits by the table thinking a moment, then takes a piece of paper and makes ready his stylographic pen.*] Let me see; can I make it seem accidental; it would be so much less bother and trouble for them! [*He thinks a second, then writes.*] "I have accidentally taken an overdose of my sleeping draught. I have tried to call some one, but it's no use. I ask only one thing, that you forget all my sins, wipe out their memory with my name. I want my boy to change his name, too." [*He hesitates a moment, and then scratches that sentence heavily out.*] No, I won't say that. [*He waits a moment.*] God in

heaven, what wouldn't I give for one friendly word just now! Some one to sort of say *good-by* to me — take my hand — even a *servant!*

[*He looks about him, showing signs of drowsiness. The door Right bursts open.* STERLING *quickly hides the letter in his inside pocket as* WARDEN *comes in.*

WARDEN. My hat! Where's my hat!

[*He looks about for it*

STERLING. [*Quietly.*] Ned?

WARDEN. My hat, I say! Where's my hat?

[*Looking.*

STERLING. Ned!

[*Something in his voice arrests* WARDEN'S *attention.*

WARDEN. What? [*He looks at him.*] What's the matter —

STERLING. Nothing — I'm half asleep, that's

all — the reaction — I'm worn out and I've changed my mind —

WARDEN. How do you mean?

STERLING. I'm going away for good — that's the best I can do; I want you to forgive me — *could* you? What do you say? Forgive me for everything! For the sake of the old schoolboy days —

WARDEN. When are you going?

STERLING. To-day. Will you say good-by to me and wish me well on my journey?

WARDEN. [*Speaks without sympathy.*] You can count on me always to help you in any way I can. You can still retrieve a good deal if you're strong enough.

STERLING. I know what a beastly friend I've been, and yesterday was more than any man would stand, but forgive that, too, will you? I've always been a bad lot!

WARDEN. [*Goes to him and speaks, with the sympathy of a man for a child coming into his voice.* No, a weak lot; that's been your ruin, Dickie. I'll see you again before you go.

STERLING. No, I'm going to sleep as long as I can now, and I don't want any one to wake me up; but when I do wake, I shall have other things to do. This is good-by.

WARDEN. Well, good luck! [*He starts to go. The two men look at each other, and finally* STERLING *gets the courage to hold out his hand.* WARDEN *hesitates a moment, then shakes it.*] Good luck!

[*He goes out Left.*

[STERLING, *who has been growing more and more drowsy, as soon as he is alone, goes with difficulty to the door and locks it. He is so drowsy that he leans against the door for a moment; then he starts to go back to the table. but is unable to*

get there and sinks on the sofa half way between the table and the door. His eyes close, but suddenly he starts violently and tries to rise, but cannot, crying out faintly.

STERLING. Good God — the money! I forgot the money — who'll pay my debts? Ah, this is a fitting climax for my life — the weakest, dirtiest thing I've done — [*He gets the letter from his pocket and holds it in his hand; the light of the afternoon grows slowly dim, like his fading sight and senses. He murmurs twice in a faint, drowsy voice.*] Coward! Coward!

[BLANCHE, *in the hall outside Right, calls his name.*

BLANCHE. Dick!

[STERLING'S *body relaxes and sets. The letter drops from his lifeless hands.*

[BLANCHE *enters with* RUTH, *followed by*

RICHARD, *who rides a stick with a horse's head and wears a soldier's cap.*

RICHARD. Merry Christmas, father!

BLANCHE. [*Going toward the sofa.*] Dick!

RICHARD. Merry Christmas, father!

BLANCHE. Sh! Father's asleep.

[*They steal back toward the other door when* WARDEN *enters Right.*

WARDEN. Oh, you are here! I went down into the drawing-room where I left you.

BLANCHE. Sh!

[*She points to* STERLING, *who lies apparently asleep. They speak in lowered voices.*

WARDEN. Yes, I have a message for you from him.

[*Looking at* RICHARD *and* RUTH.

RUTH. [*Who understands.*] Come, Richard, I haven't seen your tree yet.

[*She goes out Right with* RICHARD

WARDEN. [*To* BLANCHE.] Give me your hand.

[*She does so wonderingly.*

WARDEN. [*Softly, with a man's tenderness in his voice.*] He is going away for good.

BLANCHE. Away?

WARDEN. For good.

BLANCHE. [*Slowly, withdrawing her hand.*] For good? [*She looks over toward* STERLING, *and then back to* WARDEN.] What does he mean?

WARDEN. We will know when he wakes.

THE CURTAIN STEALS SOFTLY DOWN